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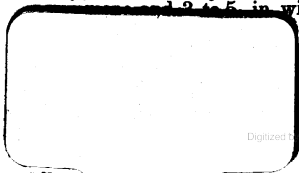
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THE
SCHOLARS OF ARNESIDE.

A Tale.

BY

HARRIET MARTINEAU.

LONDON :
CHARLES FOX, 67, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1834.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES,*
Duke Street, Lambeth,

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PREFACE.

IN treating of some of our methods of Taxation, it has been my object to show that they are unjust, odious and unprofitable, to a degree which could never be experienced under a system of simple, direct taxation. Believing that such a system must be finally and generally adopted, I have endeavoured to do the little in my power towards preparing and stimulating the public mind to make the demand.

If I had consulted my own convenience, and the value of my little books as literary productions, I should have written less rapidly than I have done. My conviction was and is, that the best means of satisfying the interest of my readers on such a subject as I had chosen, was to publish monthly. I am now about to compensate for my much speaking by a long silence. It costs me some pain to say this: but the great privilege of human life,—that of looking forward, is for ever

at hand for stimulus and solace ; and I already pass over the few years of preparation, and contemplate the time when, better qualified for their service, I may greet my readers again.

H. M.

July 1st, 1834.

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THE SCHOLARS OF ARNESIDE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERIES OF WISDOM.

"COME, my maiden : come and tell me. You know what it is I like to hear of a Sunday evening," said Nurse Ede to her little girl. Nurse was sitting with her hands before her, beside the old round table from which she had cleared away the supper. As it was Sunday evening, she could not work ; and nurse had never been taught to read. Little Mildred was standing on the door-sill, watching Owen and Ambrose who were engaged outside. As she turned in at her mother's summons, she said she thought it rained ; which the sheep would be glad of to-morrow.

Mrs. Ede went to the door to call in her boys, lest Owen's best jacket should suffer by the rain.

"Bless the lads !" cried she. "What are they sprawling on the ground in that manner for ?"

"Watching the ants home," Mildred explained. "There are more ants than ever, mother : all in a line. Ambrose found where they went to at one end ; and now he is looking for the other

nest. They are running as fast as ever they can go."

"Though'tis Sunday," observed nurse. "Well! 'tis not every body that Sunday is given to: and it is no rule, my dear, because the ants run as fast as ever they can go, that you should not walk quietly to school and to church, as the Lord bids. Come in, my dears, and leave the ants to go to their beds. It is coming up for rain, and mizzles somewhat already. Come in, and tell me about school this morning. I had not the luck to be at a school in my day," she went on to say, while the boys followed her in, and brushed the dust from each other's elbows and knees. "I had nothing to tell my poor father of a Sunday evening, of what I had learned. So let me hear now. I am sure you were steady children this morning."

On the occasion of Sunday evening, the children were indulged with the use of the fine, large footstool, which the late Mrs. Arruther had worked with her own hands as a wedding present for nurse's mother. When infants, it had been their weekly privilege to show their mother which of the embroidered flowers was a rose, and which a heart's-ease, and which a tulip; and now that they were somewhat too old to confound the rose and the tulip, they took it in turn to sit on the stool at their mother's knee, while they imparted their little learning to her who meekly received from her own children some scraps of knowledge which she had been denied the opportunity of gaining during her own young days.

"I warrant I know what set ye to look after the ants," said she. "There is a bit about the ants in the bible that I have heard read in church. Which of ye can read it to me, I wonder?"

Ambrose looked at Owen, and Owen looked doubtfully at the large old bible which Mildred reverently brought down from the shelf, at a glance from her mother. Owen did not know where, in all that great book, to look for the bit about the ant. While he was turning over the leaves, stopping to consider every great A he came to, Mildred wanted to know whether it was an ant that had tickled her face at church this morning, and hung from her hair by a thread smaller than she could see.

It was of the nature of an ant, her mother thought. It had much the make of an ant: but it was called a money-spinner.

"Does it spin money?" asked Mildred quickly.

"O yes. My father used to tell me it would spin penny pieces from the ground up as high as our thatch."

"And as high as the mill, perhaps?"

"I dare say. But my father did not tell me that, by reason of the mill not being built in his time."

"I wish I had not put the money-spinner away," said Mildred, thoughtfully. "I wish I could get another."

"Perhaps one will be sent to you one of these days, if you be a steady girl. And you will get penny pieces, and perhaps silver as you grow bigger, if you look to the sheep as your master

would have you. Now, boys : have you found about the ant ?”

No. They had found “Adam” near the beginning, and had got past “Aaron,” and found that “Abimelech” was too long a word to be the one they wanted. The “Ands” abounded so to tantalize and perplex them exceedingly ; and when Owen recollected that “ant” might begin with a small “a,” both came to a full stop. The mother was kind enough, however, to say that another part of the bible would do as well. She might read her the piece they had read in school in the morning.

Owen began. He did his best ; never looking off the book, or sparing himself the trouble of spelling every word that he did not know : but his mother gained little by what he read. He mixed his spelling with his reading so completely and varied his tone so little, not knowing that he should render the stops as evident to his mother’s ear as they were to his eye, that she could make nothing of the sense. The passage was about some priests carrying the ark over Jordan ; and this was a puzzle to her. Her principal idea about Jordan was that almonds came thence ; and she now therefore learned for the first time that almonds came like fish out of the water ; and how the ark, which she knew had carried Noah and his family, and a pair of every living creature in the world, should itself be carried on the shoulders of a few clergymen, was what she could not clearly comprehend. It happened that Owen had been told that there were two arks,

and the difference between them ; but he did not remember to explain this : so his mother, who would not for the world wonder at any thing that could be found in the bible, supposed that it was all right, sighed to think that her poor husband had not lived to witness his eldest boy's learning, and then smiled at Ambrose when it became his turn to try.

Ambrose was in the class below Owen. At present, he could read only by spelling every word. While he was about it, Mildred's eyes and attention wandered. The rain was now pattering against the lattice, and dripping from the thatch in little streams, which a ray from the parting clouds in the west made to glitter like silver. Then the light grew almost into sunshine on the wall of the room, and on the shelf where nurse laid up the apparatus of her art. Mrs. Ede was employed by her few opulent neighbours as a nurse only ; but she was regarded as also a doctor by the poor residents in the village of Arneside. She held herself in readiness, not only to nurse them, night or day, when they were ill, but to administer to them from the phials and bottles of red, yellow, and black liquids which stood on her shelf. These medicines now shone in the western light so brilliantly as to catch her little daughter's eye ; and, while looking, Mildred observed two or three new articles of a strange construction which lay upon the shelf, or hung against the wall. She could not wait till Ambrose had done reading to ask what they were ; and she was answered as she might have known

she would be,—by a mysterious look, and a finger laid upon the lips. It was not only that Ambrose was reading, but that it was utterly in vain to question Mrs. Ede about the circumstances of her art. Whether she was persuaded that knowledge as to her means would destroy faith in his practice, or that she wished to preserve a becoming degree of awe in her little ones by mystery in the one matter in which she was wiser than they,—it so happened that they, had never enticed her into the slightest confidence respecting the furniture of the south wall of her room. When Ambrose brought in the roots he had been directed to procure on the heath, the basket and rusty knife were gravely delivered up, and received without a smile, and with only a word of inquiry as to whether the roots had grown on a moonshiny or shady piece of turf; and whether the dew was off or on when they were dug up. Sometimes, when she was believed to be gone out for the day, one little sinner placed a stool for another to climb, that the mysteries might be handled and smelled as well as looked at. Tasting was out of the question, so dreadful were the stories which they had heard of little people who had fallen down dead with the mere drawing of a forbidden cork. Once, also, nurse returned unexpectedly when Owen had come in from the mill, and Mildred from the moor, and they were trying experiments with the longest of her bandages; Owen in a corner, holding one end, and his sister at the opposite corner, turning herself round and round to see how many times

the long strip would fold about her body. What she heard said by way of warning to Ambrose, when the exposure was made to him, might have taught her the uselessness of questions: but she forgot the incident of the bandage when she this evening offended again by her curiosity. She did what she could to profit by Ambrose's reading, rocking herself and crossing her arms in imitation of her mother; but her eyes would still turn upon the shelf, and her heart could not help envying the kitten which had made a daring leap up, and was now thrusting in its nose, and making a faint jingle among the sacred vessels.

"This is what you should attend to, my dear," nurse explained, laying her hand upon the bible, when the boy was at length taking breath after his task. "The Lord gave the bible for little girls to understand; and they should not ask what it is not proper for them to know."

"How are we to find out what it is proper for us to know?" asked Owen.

His mother told him that there would always be somebody at hand to tell him;—either Mr. Waugh, or the parson, or herself. She would do her best, she was sure.

"I shall not ask Mrs. Arruther, I can tell her," observed Owen. "She never lets Mr. Waugh alone about the Sunday school; and she has done all she can to set the parson against it."

"She is very strong in her mind against that school, indeed, Owen; and many's the time when she has been sharp with me for letting you learn, having herself a bad opinion of learning for such

as we are. And often enough I have been uneasy about what I ought to do: but, having great confidence in Mr. Waugh, and having always heard my poor father and others say that a little learning is a fine thing for those that can get it. I hoped I was not out of my duty when I let you go to the school, as Mr. Waugh desired. And I hope Ambrose and Mildred are both very thankful for being allowed to go, as well as you though not belonging to the paper-mill, and able only to take their schooling every other week when it is not their turn with the sheep."

"Ambrose can't keep up in the class though as if he went every Sunday, like the other boys."

"The more reason for his making the best of his time when he is there. Only think, Ambrose what it would have been for you to be out on the hills every Sunday, away from the church, and no more able to read your bible than I am. I trust, my dear, that you will be as well able as Owen, though not perhaps so soon, (but you will have time before you to go on learning when he is done,) to read a chapter to me when I grow old, and maybe not able to hear the clergyman in church. But you must none of you be bent upon learning more than it is proper for you to know, lest you should bring me to think that Mrs. Arruther has been right all the time, and that I have been doing harm when I was most anxious for your good. Why can't my little maiden," she went on to say, "play with the kitten, or look out at the door, as well as be forever glancing up at that shelf?"

Mildred lost no time in availing herself of this permission to play. Puss had disappeared ; but when called, she showed herself through a hole in the crazy wall of the cottage, and jumped upon Mildred all the way as she went to the door.

" Me ! where are all the clouds gone ? " exclaimed Mildred, shading her eyes with her hand, and looking up into the sky. " 'Twas right black when you called me in ; and now it is all blue. There's not a cloud."

" They are all fetched up above the sky, my dear, to make a fine Sunday evening."

" I doubt whether the sheep will like it altogether as we do," observed Ambrose. " There is a mist on their walk yonder ; and it is my belief their coats are heavy with wet at this very time."

Ambrose was very consequential about sheep, there being no one at home to contradict anything he might say about creatures that he had more to do with than either mother or brother. All that could be done was to question whether it signified to the sheep whether they were more in a mist on a Saturday or a Sunday evening. If it made no difference to them, and they were hidden and out of sight, it remained a fine Sunday evening to people below ; and that was enough to be thankful for.

While the whole party was gazing with shaded eyes towards the upland which was enveloped with a white cloud, through whose folds neither beast nor man could at present be discerned, somebody seized little Mildred by the shoulders

from behind. Of course, being startled, screamed.

"Dear me, Ryan, is it you?" exclaimed n to the old man who had approached unawa
"And all dripping with the rain,—your s and all,—and we have no fire! But I will one presently. Boys, bring in some furze fr the shed; and Mildred, strike a light. D think of standing in your wet clothes, neighb But who would have expected to see you trav ling with your sack on a Sunday?"

Ryan would not be blamed for making a p to see an old friend. He had a mind for hour's chat with nurse Ede, if she would let h dry his sack, and lay his head upon it, in a corner of her cottage. As for the hour's ch nurse was quite willing; and Ryan was welco to house-room: but she was engaged, she w sorry to say, to sit up with Mrs. Arruther, t night. She had promised to be at the Hall nine o'clock. No time was lost. The fierce he of the burning furze soon made Ryan as dry a warm as on any summer's noon, and quite rea for chat and bread and eggs.

"So the poor old lady is ill, is she?" said h
"What, is she very bad?"

"Very bad. With all the trying, there is r getting down to the wound; and she is sad afflicted with spasms in the blood that make h heart turn round till I sometimes doubt wheth it will ever come right again. She has awf nights."

"If all be true that is said," declared Ryan

“there is enough happening to bend her heart till it breaks.”

How? What? Who was doing any harm to Mrs. Arruther?—There was no use in the children’s asking and listening. This was one of the pieces of knowledge not meant for them. They could find out no more than that the news related to Mr. Arruther, the lady’s son, and the member for a small borough in the district; and that the gentleman had done something very wicked. What was his crime could not be discovered. Whether he had overlooked seams in sorting rags, or let a lamb stray, or torn his clothes in the briers, and forgotten to mend them, or played with the hassock at church, must be ascertained hereafter: but some one of these offences it must be, as the children had heard of no others.

“And what is your news, Ryan?” asked his hostess in her turn. “Sure you must have some, so far as you travel this way and that?”

“Ay; I have news. I have news plenty; such as you have hardly chanced to hear in your day, I fancy.”

“Why, really! and yet I have lived in the time when all the news about Buonaparte used to come; when our people used to be hanging the flag from the church almost every month, for a victory or something. It can hardly be anything greater than that. Hark, children, hark! Mr. Ryan is going to tell us some news. But I hope, Ryan, it is such as may be told on a Lord’s day evening.”

“Certainly. If my news be not diligently

spread, we may chance soon to have no Lord's day evenings. You may look shocked but what is to come of all Christian things if the heathen come upon us? and what heathens are so bad as the Turks, you know?"

Mrs. Ede quailed with consternation, not having heard of the Turks, and having no other idea about heathens than that the bible called them very bad people, and that (for so she always taken for granted) they lived upon heath—probably after the manner of gipsies. She was afraid this bad news was too true for many opportunities as Mr. Ryan had for knowing what was going on abroad.

"Indeed you are right, Mrs. Ede. It was a man from abroad that told me. He has not been three months over from Hamburgh with his cargo of rags from the Mediterranean; and he informed me that the Turks are coming up to take Russia and Europe, and make Turkish slaves of all Christians."

"The Lord have mercy! And then, I suppose, I had better not let my boy and girl go out on the hills after the sheep. It will be safer to keep them at home, won't it? I would do without their little wages, rather than that they should light upon any Turks under the hedges, or in a lane."

"You will have notice in good time, neighbour. I myself will endeavour to let you know the first minute I can. And if I don't, you will find it out by all the church-bells tolling, and the battles on all sides through the country. O, yes,

every bell that has a clapper will toll, partly to give notice, and partly to see what the Turks can do against the Christian bells of our Christian churches. Yes, every bell in the land will toll."

"Same as when the princess died," said Milledred. "I heard the great bell all the way from P—— that day, when I was on the hill-top. Maybe I'll hear it again, if the wind come from that way."

"Indeed you shall not be on the hill-top, child, the day that the Turks come. Could you give us an idea when it will be, Ryan? It would be a pity but some of the ewes should yean first, if it is not dictating to the Lord to say so."

The enemy could hardly be coming just yet, Ryan thought, as the Government was going to change the Parliament, in hopes of getting one that would be more fit to preserve the empire than the present. Mr. Arruther would be soon coming into the neighbourhood to manage his election; and that event might serve in some sort as a token.

"Mrs. Arruther would have known all about the Turks, if everything had been right,—you know what I mean?" said Mrs. Ede to her guest. "But I suppose, as it is, I had better not mention anything of danger to the poor lady, sick as she is."

"By no means, unless she breaks the subject to you. Tell her other sorts of news. Tell her that I and my sack are likely soon to come travelling at the rate of a hundred miles an hour."

"O, Mr. Ryan, where will you find the horses

that will bring you at that rate? Why, a hundred horses would not bring you so quick as that if you had money to hire them!"

Ryan smiled, and said that he meant to travel at this rate without horses at all. Ay; that might wonder at any one travelling at such a rate on foot; but the way was this:—there was a new sort of road going to be made, on which never a horse was to set foot, and where, by paying half-a-crown to get upon it, a man and his baggage—and a woman too,—might do as he had said. It was to be called a rail-road.

Because it was to be railed in, no doubt, to keep off those who could not pay half-a-crown. Now, if the government could keep the enemy off this road, and let all its own people upon it, all might run away, so as to leave the Turks no chance of following. This seemed to open a prospect of escape; and nurse rose in better spirits, to put on her bonnet to go to Mrs. Arrather's. A curious picture was before her mind's eye, of Ryan's gliding along a rail-road with his sack on his back, as fast as she had sometimes gone in dreams,—for all the world like a boy sliding on the ice in winter. The wonder was that, if Ryan spoke truth, this curious road would be quite as efficacious on the hottest day of summer as after a week's frost.

When she had finished her little arrangements for the comfort of her guest, and bidden him good night, she called Ambrose out after her, and desired him to fetch cheese from the village grocer for Ryan's breakfast, the moment the shop should

be opened. If he was there by the time the first shutter was taken down, he might cut for himself and Mildred a quarter of the cheese he should bring home. It would give a relish to their bread when they should have been after the sheep for a couple of hours, and feel ready for their breakfast on the hill-side.

CHAPTER II.

MATERNAL ANTICIPATIONS.

As there must be no communication with Mrs. Arruther about the most important article of Ryan's news, nurse would have had no objection to talk it over a little on her way through the village; but she found no opportunity to do so. There were no walkers to be seen enjoying the cool of the evening by the side of the placid Arne, as it flowed on towards the fall where it turned the wheel of Mr. Waugh's paper-mill. There were no husbands and wives sitting outside their doors, after having put their children to sleep. There were no lingerers in the churchyard, talking over the sermon of the morning. A low, confused murmur of suppressed voices issued from the narrow opening of the ale-house door, as it stood ajar, and let a gleam of light from within fall across the road. Almost every interior was visible from being more or less lighted up; but no one offered encouragement for a word of conversation in passing. Mrs. Dowley

was slapping her boy Tom because he would not go to sleep as she bade him ; and Mrs. Green, whose children were more obedient in this one respect, was dozing with her head upon the table, by way of whiling away the time till her husband should come home from the Rose. Kate Jeffery was reading to her grandfather as he sat in his great chair ; and it would not do to interrupt her, lest it should be the bible that she was reading. A knot of lads were gathered about the churchyard gate ; but their voices sounded so rude, that nurse, who was a somewhat timid woman, made a circuit to avoid passing through them. The porter at Mrs. Arruther's let her in with a studious haste which seemed to intimate that he thought her late ; and she did not stay to be told so. In the housekeeper's room she only tarried to see that her close cap looked neat, and to pin on the shawl she always wore when she sat up at night. Mrs. Arruther had asked for her six times in the last ten minutes ; so there was not a moment to be lost.

" You were to come at nine o'clock, and it is ten minutes past, nurse," said the sick lady. " This is always the way people treat me,—as if there was not a clock in Arneside."

There were several clocks in Arneside, by one of which it was two minutes past nine, by another it wanted a quarter to nine ; a third was at half-past eight, and a fourth was striking three as nurse passed its door. But Mrs. Ede never contradicted her patients. She told of Ryan's arrival, and was admonished that no guest

of hers could possibly be of half so much importance as Mrs. Arruther.

"I know how it is, nurse. It is those children of yours that can do nothing for themselves, any more than any other children that are educated as the fashion is now. They will want you to wash their faces for them, and put them to bed, as long as they live, if you go on sending them to that Sunday school."

Nurse was very sorry to hear this. She did not know, in such a case, what they were to do to get their faces washed when she should be gone to her grave, where she hoped to be long before her three children. But indeed she must say for her little folks that they could all put themselves to bed, and had done it, even the youngest, these two years past.

"Ay, ay; that was before you sent them to the school. Keep them there a little longer, and they will be fit for nothing at all. You never will believe any warning I give you about it; but I tell you again, the three last housemaids I had this year, one after the other, were the worst that ever entered my doors; and they could all read and write. What do you think of that? O, my head! My head!"

Nurse thought it was time that the draught should be taken, and proposed to smooth the pillow, and shade the light. This done, she wound up the lady's watch, and sat down behind the curtain, in hopes that the patient would sleep. Of this, however, there seemed but little chance. Mrs. Arruther tossed about, and groaned out her

wonder why she could not go to sleep like other people, till nurse was obliged to take notice, and ask whether there was anything that she could do for her.

“Do ! yes, to be sure. Bring out the light from wherever you have hidden it. It is hard enough not to be able to go out and see things, as I have done all my life till now ; and here you won’t let me see what is in my own room. Where are you going to put the light ? Not under that picture. You know I can’t bear that picture. And, mind, to-morrow morning—Bless me ! what do you lift up your hand in that manner for ?”

Nurse could only beg pardon. She had made an involuntary gesture of astonishment on hearing that the lady could not bear that beautiful picture of her own only son,—that picture which represented him in his chubby boyhood, standing at his mother’s knee, with hoop in hand. She was told not to be troublesome with her wonder, but to see that the picture was carried up into the lumber garret to-morrow, and something put in its place to hide its marks on the wall ; anything that would not stare down upon people as they lay in bed, as that child’s eyes did. By rousing the wearied maid, just as she was falling asleep, nurse obtained a muslin apron, which, when she stood on the table, she could hang over the picture : and two or three pins, judiciously applied below, obviated all danger of the veil rising with any breath of air, so as to disclose the features of the boy.

“ You had better take warning, and look to your children in time, nurse, before they grow up to plague you as my boy has plagued me.”

She had drawn back the curtain, and now showed herself as much disposed for conversation as if she had taken a waking instead of a sleeping draught.

“ And you lay it all to education, ma'am? You think the university to blame for it? Well! 'tis hard to say.”

“ What put such a notion into your head? Who ever dreams of objecting to the university for gentlemen? You would not have my son brought up as ignorant as a ploughboy; would you? No, no. I have done my duty by him in that way. He had the best-recommended tutors I could get for him, and every advantage at the university that was to be had; and the best proof of what was done for him is the credit he got there, and the prizes, and the reputation. He is a very fine scholar. Nobody denies that.”

Nurse pondered the practicability of putting the question she would have liked to have had answered; whether learning had had the same effect upon Mr. Arruther that the lady had anticipated for Owen and Ambrose. Nurse would fain know whether Mr. Arruther could wash his own face, and put himself to bed.

“ Let us hope, ma'am, that the young gentleman will live and learn. If he is not able to do little things now, perhaps——”

“ Little things! What sort of little things?”

"Well, ma'am, I thought if your late housemaids could not polish the fire-irons, or make your bed to your liking, and if you fear that my boys should not keep themselves clean when I am gone, because of their learning, perhaps. . . . But indeed, when I once saw the young gentleman, his gloves were as white as my apron, and the sunshine came back from the polish of his boots. I never saw a neater gentleman."

"He is a puppy," replied the tender mother. "I suppose it was that dandy show of his that caught the eyes of the low creature he has married. If I never get the better of this illness, she shall have none of my clothes to wear. No shopkeeper's daughter shall be seen in the laces my mother left to me. I had rather give some of them to you, nurse, at once."

"God forbid, ma'am! What should I do with laces? Such as I!"

"Very true. Now it is strange that a sensible woman like you, who knows what is proper, in her own case, should be so wrong about her children. What have they to do with education any more than you have with laces?"

Nurse took refuge under the sanction of the clergyman and of Mr. Waugh; and protested that she had as little idea of sending Owen and Ambrose to the university, as of asking that Mildred should wear the lady's family Valenciennes and Mechlin.

"Well; I wonder what it is that you would have! I can't make out what it is that you would be at!"

“Ma’am, if I had all I wished for—but I may as well be setting on a cup-full of broth to warm, as I fancy you may take a liking to a little, by-and-by.”

The lady let nurse do this. When she was tired of wondering whether she could take any broth when it should be warm, she languidly said,—

“Go on. What would you have for your children? Pray remember what I have heard you say yourself—that pride comes before a fall.”

“And a much greater one than I said that before me, ma’am. But I would not have my children made proud, because I should be sorry they should fall below what they are. If I had my wish, it would be that Owen should have work at the mill as long as he lives, so as to be pretty sure of eighteen shillings a week for a continuance; and that he should marry such a girl as Kate Jeffery, who would take as much care of his house as I would myself; and that they should never want for shoes and stockings for their children’s feet. And much the same for Ambrose.”

“Is that all? They might have all this without reading and writing.”

“Perhaps so, ma’am; but Kate reads to her grandfather of a Sunday evening, as I saw when I passed to-night; and the neighbours think, as well as I, that it is the boys that get on best with their learning that go straightest to their work; not swinging on the churchyard gate, nor swearing, to get a look that they may

make game of from grave people passing
As for Mildred, I don't well know what to wi
'Tis hard work for poor girls when they se
and have their families early : but then, I sho
be loth to leave her to live solitary in our c
tage, spending her days all alone upon the hi
However, that will be as the Lord pleas
Meantime, I should best like that fifteen ye
hence, when the boys will be perhaps sett
away, my girl should be keeping our place cle
for me, and giving me her arm to church, a
helping me with her little learning when, as oft
happens, I am at a loss to answer, for want
knowing. I have no wish to be idle, I am su
I hope to knit her stockings and make her pet
coats still, if she will clean the cupboard o
and entertain the clergyman better than I c
do."

The clergyman was not present to start t
inquiry whether such were the sum total of t
purposes for which spiritual beings were broug
into a world teeming with spiritual influence
If he had been there, he might not, perhap
have got a curtsey from nurse by telling her th
her views were quite proper, and that she right
understood what to desire for her young folk
Perhaps he might have thought little better
Mrs. Arruther's aspirations.

"My boy has cruelly disappointed me," sh
declared : "and yet I wished for no more than
had a right to expect from him. I wished th
he should be a good scholar ; and so he is.
wished that he should have the looks and man
ners of a gentleman."

“And sure, ma’am, so he has?”

“O yes: and I hoped to see him in parliament, if it was only for once; and I carried this point, and mean to carry it again, if I can. He is in parliament with my money, and he shall have enough for the next election. But there’s an end. Instead of marrying as I wished, he has taken up with a tradesman’s daughter; and he may make the best of his bargain. Not an acre of my land, nor a shilling of my money that I can leave away, shall he have. If I am disappointed in him, I will have my satisfaction. I will do what I can to show people that they should take care what they expect from their children. He sha’n’t have all the laugh on his side. He sha’n’t say for nothing that my behaviour to him is unpardonable.”

Nurse wondered whether at the university they taught to forgive and forget. If they did, perhaps the young gentleman would be bent upon making up matters, if he thought himself put upon; and then there might be a coming round on the other side.

“I don’t know what they do there about forgiving; but I am sure they teach the young men to forget. He never wrote to me above once, the last year he was there; and that was for money. And he never thought more of his cousin Ellen, though I told him to marry her, and requested him to send her down a lap-dog like mine. When I asked him what he meant by it, he said Ellen and all had entirely slipped his memory. I told him my mind, pretty plainly;

so I suppose it will slip his memory that I live hereabouts, when he comes down to his election. If he tries the gate——”

“O, ma’am! You will not turn him away?”

“No: it might cost him his election; and I don’t wish that. I should miss my own name from the newspapers then; and it would be hard to lose my pleasure in the newspapers. I will do nothing to hurt his election. He shall be let in to see me; and then I will say to him, ‘All that lawn and those fields, and all this house and the plate would have been yours very soon, (for I can’t live long,) if you had married your cousin Ellen, as I bade you: but it is too late for that now; and Ellen’s husband shall have every ——’—What do you look in that way for, nurse? I am not going to leave it into another name. Ellen’s husband shall take my name before he touches a shilling.”

“And if a judgment should come upon us meantime, ma’am. If the heathen should—— Did not you say there is to be a new election? Is not that the same as the government getting a new parliament?”

“To be sure.”

“And that is done when a danger is thought to be at hand, is not it?”

“Not always; and if it was, no harm can come to my property. The deeds are all in my lawyer’s hands,—in his strong-box,—safe enough.”

It was plain that Mrs. Arruther knew nothing about the approach of the Turks; and it would

be cruel to tell her, when she might very likely die before they appeared in Arneside.

“What are you afraid of, nurse? I am sure you are in a panic about something. It is too soon for your boys to be marrying against your will, I suppose?”

“Yes, thank God. And they will never be able to marry so far below them as your young gentleman may do; for the reason that they will never stand so high as he. But yet I can fancy that if my Owen took to a giggling jade, with her hair hanging about her ears, and a sharp voice, it would weigh heavy on my heart.”

“And your money would weigh light in his pocket, hey?”

“I shall have no money to leave, ma’am; and as to——”

“No money to leave! I dare say. You never will have money to leave while you throw away your services as you do. I did wonder at you last week, when you managed to find somebody else to sit up with old Mr. Barnes, that you might nurse Widow Wilks’s child. I saw beforehand what would come of it. The child died, just the same as if you had been with Mr. Barnes; and you missed your chop, and brandy and water, and the handsome pay you would have had; and Mr. Barnes is a nice, mild old gentleman, that you might have been glad to nurse. I thought you knew your duty to your children better than to waste your services in any such way.”

Nurse was very sorry the lady was displeased with what she had done. She had acted for the

best, thinking what an aggravation it would of the weary widow's grief for her child if she fancied, after its death, that it might have been saved by good nursing. Having acted for the best, she hoped her children would not remember these things against her when she was gone.

"You seem to be always thinking how things will be after you are gone. What will all that signify when you are cold in your grave?"

"It seems natural, ma'am, when one has children to care for. I hardly think that God gives us children only that we may play with them while they sprawl about and amuse us, and make use of them while they are subject to our will, having no steady one of their own. I think, the yearning that mothers have after their sons and daughters when they are grown up into men and women, that it must be meant for us to keep a hold over their hearts when they have done acting by our wills. And so, when I talk of what is to happen when I am gone, it is with the feeling that I dare not go and appear before God without doing my best to have my children think of me as one that tried to do her duty by God and them."

"But if Owen married as you said, he should he, for one, think pleasantly of you?"

"Indeed I am afraid the thought of his folly would rankle. But my endeavour would be to make the lightest and best of what could not be helped. I would tell him that there could be no offence to me in his judging for himself in a case where nobody has a right to judge for him; and

I should make no difference between him and the rest. My father's bible is, as they know, to go to the one that can read in it best when I am on my death-bed ; and the other few things are to be equally divided. My girl is to have my spinning-wheel ; and the deal table will be Owen's ; and the chair and three stools——"

" Those things are to your children, I suppose, much the same as my lawn and this house to my son ?"

" I dare say they would be, ma'am ; and, in some sense, all property that is left by the dying to the living seems to be much alike, whether it be great, or whether it be little. To my mind, it is not so much the use of a legacy to give pleasures to those that can enjoy little pleasure when a parent or other near friend is taken away, as to leave the comfort of feeling that the departed wished to be just and kind. It is all very well, you see, that my girl should have the use of my spinning-wheel ; but if it was made of King Solomon's cedar wood, Mildred's chief pleasure would be to think, while she spun, that I remembered her kindly when I lay dying ; and for this, a spinning-wheel does as well as a room full of pictures, or a mint of money. And when I see a family quarrelling and going to law about their father's legacies, I cannot but think how much better it would be for them if each of the daughters had but a spinning-wheel, and each of the sons neither more nor less than a deal table, or the chair their father sat in.—But," lowering her voice, " here am I chattering on without

thinking, while you are just asleep, which I am glad to see."

Whether from a disposition to sleep, or from some other cause, Mrs. Arruther's eyes were closed; and she did not move while nurse or more softly drew the curtain. When, in the silence, nurse began to consider what, in the fulness of her heart, she had been saying, she was thunderstruck at her own want of good manners in uttering what must have seemed intended as a reproof to the lady about her conduct to her son. Her heart beat in her throat as one sentence after another of her discourse came back upon her memory. What was she that she should be lecturing Mrs. Arruther?—But perhaps the lady had been too drowsy to listen. It was to be hoped so, rather than that she should suppose that nurse was paying her off for her opposition to the children's going to the school.

When sufficiently composed for the night duty which she never omitted, nurse added to her usual prayers the petition that this suffering lady might be spared till she could see clearly what was just that she should do towards the son who had displeased her. Before she had finished there was another movement, and a mutter "O dear!" from within the curtain.

"I hoped you had been asleep, ma'am. Can you find rest?"

"No, nurse; but you cannot help that. I will see my lawyer to-morrow. It is too late to be thinking about wills to-night. But I don't believe I shall sleep a wink to-night. Do you take the

broth, nurse. I cannot bear the thought of it. It prevents my getting to sleep. I believe I shall never close my eyes all night."

Nurse really thought she would, if she would only take the other draught, and settle her mind to trouble herself about nothing till to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

LESSONS ON THE HILLS.

"FETCH down a plate from the cupboard, Ambrose, and cover up the beer, while I cut the cheese. I suppose we may have a quarter of the cheese, as mother said," observed Mildred to Ambrose, as the early sun was peeping in through the upper panes of the cottage lattice, the next morning.

"Yes; we may have the quarter. I was at the shop before the first shutter was down. Here—here's a plate for Mr. Ryan's cheese. We will carry ours in the paper I brought it in. How shall I keep puss from getting at the things? Is not that Mr. Ryan stirring?—Mr. Ryan! Mr. Ryan!" (calling through the door.) "Please to look to your breakfast here, that the cat does not get it. We are going now; and Owen is gone to the mill; and mother is not home yet."

"Off with you, lad!" answered Ryan from within. "Leave the cat to me. And if you can pick up any rags for me among the briers, you know I always give honest coppers for them;

and yet more for tarred ropes, if such an article comes in your way."

"Tarred ropes! How should we get them? If tar by itself would do, I could help you with some of that. The shepherds always keep it against the shearing. Would tar by itself do?"

The loud laugh from within showed Ambrose that he had said something foolish; and he hastily departed, supposing that Mr. Ryan had been making a joke of him.

Cool and moist as all had been in the valley as they passed, the children found that the dew was gone from the furze-bushes on the hills, and that the sun was very warm.

"What had we better do?" asked Mildred, contemplating the yellow cheese, which began to shine almost as soon as she opened the paper. "Shall we eat it directly? I think I am beginning to be very hungry; are not you? And it will be half melted, and the bread dry, if we carry it about in the sun."

"Mother said we were to keep the sheep for a couple of hours first," was Ambrose's reply. "And besides, I have some leaves to get for her; and they won't be fit if I let them stay till the dew is off; and it is off already, except under the shady side of the bushes. Put the breakfast under the shady side of this bush; I'll look after it.—Do you go about and get some rags, if you can find any. The briers and hedges are the most likely places."

"There won't be any Turks under the hedge will there?" asked Mildred, lowering her voice.

"I don't know. I don't rightly know what Turks are ; but if anything happens amiss, call out loud to me, and I'll come. Go ; make haste. The sheep are quiet enough."

"And how are we to know when two hours are over ?"

"We must each guess, I suppose ; and if we don't agree, we'll draw lots with a long spike of grass and a short one. The long one for me, you know, because I'm the eldest."

In forty minutes, both were agreed that two hours were over ; and each complimented the other on the fruits of the morning's work. Ambrose exhibited a handful of leaves, which he placed under a big stone, that they might not be blown away ; and Mildred brought the foot of a worsted stocking, which she had found in a ditch ; a corner of a blue cotton handkerchief with white spots, which had been impaled on a furze bush ; and a bit of white linen as large as the palm of her little hand, with twenty holes in it. How many coppers would Ryan be likely to give her for this treasure ?

Ambrose rejected the worsted article, to which his sister gave a sigh as she saw it thrown backwards among a group of sheep, who scampered away in their first terror, but soon gathered together to look at the fragment. The other two might be worth the third part of a farthing, if Mr. Ryan should be in a liberal mood, Ambrose thought.

"I wonder how much paper they will make," Mildred observed. "Mr. Ryan says they are

to go into his sack with the rest of his rags, paper. Mother did not tell you what she wanted the leaves for, I suppose?"

"No; and I sha'n't ask her. Do you ever hear people talk about what mother makes?"

"Why, yes; I do. Molly at Mrs. Arruthe was telling the gipsy woman one day about mother; and she said she had some strange secrets. And then they asked me what one thing meant, and another. But they did not mean to hear all they said, any more than Mrs. Dowley when she winked at her husband, and glanced down at mother's apron where some green was peeping out: but it was only cabbage that time. They all think her a very wise doctor."

"How they do send after her when they are ill! Mr. Yapp said one day that she would be wise to bring up one of us to be a doctor after her: but Mrs. Dowley was there then, and she said it could not be, because mother's was of the nature of a gift that could not be taught.—Here is your other bit of cheese. Will you have it now, or keep it till dinner?"

Mildred had intended to reserve part of the cheese for dinner; but having now nothing particular to do, and the sheep offering nothing which required her attention, the whole of the delicacy at length disappeared, crumb by crumb. Then she lay back, looking at a flight of birds that now met, now parted, now crossed each other in all directions, high in the air. Ambrose meanwhile stretched himself at length, with his face to the ground, watching a hairy brown caterpillar

which he took the liberty of bringing back with a gentle pinch by the tail, as often as it flattered itself that it was getting beyond his reach. He presently wished that they had a pair of scissors with them.

"Won't the knife do as well?" Mildred languidly inquired.

"No. I want to cut off the creature's hair."

"What creature?" asked Mildred, starting up, but seeing no creature with hair, but a remote donkey and herself.

"Here: this young gentleman," replied her brother, exhibiting the writhing caterpillar on the palm of his brown hand. Well might the creature feel uncomfortable; for this hand which had carried cheese must have been far from fragrant, in comparison with the thyme-bed on which the poor caterpillar had been disporting himself. What Ambrose wanted was to see whether it would come out a common green caterpillar, when stripped of its long sleek hairs. The process of plucking was tried in the absence of scissors: but the material was too fine. The knife was next applied, but the creature was destined never to be shaven and shorn. A slip of the knife cut it in two, and fetched blood on Mildred's finger at the same time. The perturbation thus caused completely awakened her, and she was ready for the sport of shepherd and shepherd's dog. For a very long time, Ambrose supported his dignity of shepherd. He strapped himself round with his sister's pinafore and his own for a plaid; took

long steps; wielded a thick stick, and made grand noises to the flock; while Mildred went on all fours till her back was almost broken, and barked all the while, like any dog. The sheep were silly enough to scud before her to the very last, as much alarmed as at first, till she was obliged to stop to laugh at them. All play must come to an end; and by-and-by the children were stretched, panting, on the very spot where they had breakfasted. To panting succeeded yawning; and it began to occur to both that they had yet a long day to pass before the sheep would be penned. It was against the rules of their employment that both should sleep at the same time; and, as Mildred could not keep awake, it was necessary for her brother to watch. She was not, as usual, wakened by his calling out so loud to some of his charge as to rouse her before her dream was done. She finished it, opened her eyes, sat up and stretched herself; and Ambrose was too busy to take notice.

"I had such a queer dream!" observed Mildred.—Her brother did not hear.

"I say, Ambrose, I dreamt that I was sorting rags at the mill, and there was a caterpillar upon every one of them; and—What have you got there, Ambrose? Did you hear what I said?"

"Come here," replied her brother. "Here is a story! Help me to make it out."

"A story! what, upon the very piece of paper that held the cheese! What is the story like? Tell me. You know I can't read so well as you."

"But you can help me with this part, perhaps. I will tell you what I have read when I know this word. The man would not go in somewhere; and this word tells where."

Mildred pored over the soiled piece of print, and pronounced presently that the word in question signified something about a comb. In her spelling-book, c-o-m-b spelled comb. But of the rest of the word,—“inat,”—“in,”—What could it be?

"It ends with 'nation.' 'Comb'—'nation.' Well: I must let that alone. There was a man that would not go into this place,—whatever it is,—and the people that were in it were angry because he went to his work."

"Because he did not go to his work, I suppose you mean."

"No; because he would go when they bade him not. And they watched for him one day when he was going to work, and his little boy with him. They call him a little boy, though he was eleven years old. They flew upon the man, and thumped him and kicked him as hard as ever they could. And when the boy cried, and begged they would not use his father so cruelly, one of them caught up a thick rope, and beat the boy till it was a shocking sight to see him."

"They were cruel wretches. I wonder whether there was anybody near to go for the constable? Did they get a constable?"

"I suppose so, for the people were asked how they dared to beat people so."

"And what did they say?"

"This that I can't make out, about going in and not going in: but they got a good scolding,—and that is as far as I have got."

"See what is to be done to them, and whether there is anything more about the boy."

Another half-hour's spelling and consultation revealed that the child had pulled one of the assailants down by the leg, and thus turned the fury of the man upon himself; that it was doubtful whether the boy would recover; and that, this being the case, the decision of the magistrates was that——

Here came the jagged edges of the torn newspaper, instead of the magistrates' decision. This was very disagreeable indeed. Not to know what became of the aggressors, and whether the brave boy lived or died, was cruel. Ambrose threw away the paper, and grew cross. Mildred's consolations,—that very likely the boy was well by this time, and she had no doubt the cruel people were put in prison,—were of no use. A better device than to imagine the issue suggested itself to Ambrose. He would go and ask Mr. Yapp. The paper having come from Mr. Yapp's shop, he no doubt knew the end of the story. Could not Mildred look after the flock while he ran down now? No harm could come to the sheep during the little time that he should be gone.

Mildred did not like this plan,—was sure her mother would not like it. Ambrose had better read the story over again, to try and understand it better; and she would go with him to Mr. Yapp's when the flock was penned, in the even-

ing. Never did the oriental scholar pore more diligently over a new tablet of hieroglyphics than these two children over the fragment of a police report which had fallen in their way. To no scholar can it be so important to ascertain a doubtful point of history, or to develope facts of the costume and manners of a remote people, as it was to these young creatures to learn the issue of a case in which rights like their own were invaded, and filial sympathies like their own were aggrieved.

Again, during the day, Ambrose called to his sister that he had something to say to her, and Mildred knew that it must relate to the story he had read, so complete was the possession it had taken of his mind. He thought the people round were great fools for not punishing the aggressors on the spot. If he had been there, he would not have waited to hear what the magistrates said; not he. He would have knocked down every one of them that he could get at, if it were by pulling by the leg as the poor boy had done.

"And then," said Mildred, "they would have served you the same as the boy; and if anybody had taken your part, they would have served him the same. I don't think that would do any good."

"Nothing like a battle," exclaimed Ambrose, waving his cap over his head. "I like a good battle better than all the justices and gentlemen in the world."

"I don't like battles," Mildred observed. "I do not much mind seeing you and Sam Dobbs

fight here on the heath, where you only throw one another down, and the grass is too soft to hurt you. But I saw the men fight before the Rose ; and one of them lifted the other up high into the air, and dashed him down slap upon the pavement ; and you might have heard the knock of his head as far as the pump, I'm sure. There was such a quantity of blood that I could not eat my supper ! I should not like to see such a battle often !”

“ O, only tell me when anybody does you any harm, and see how I will fight for you.”

“ I am sure I shall not tell anything about it, if you go and fight in that manner. I would ask mother or Owen to go with me to Justice Gibson. If you consider, there would be fighting all day long in our place, and much more in L——, if all people chose to battle it out instead of going to the Justice. And besides, I think the Justice can take much better care of this poor little boy than anybody that just fought a battle for him, and then went away.”

Ambrose saw this ; and before dinner was over, both the children had learned, after their own fashion, how far superior law is to vengeance, and security to retaliation. Confined as their ideas were (the picture of their own little village and few associates alone being before their eyes), this was a most important notion to have acquired. There needed only the experience of life to enable them to extend their conceptions, —Justice Gibson standing for the magistracy at large, and the little village of Arneside for social life in general.

Evening came. The sheep were penned, and the children were standing before Mr. Yapp's shop-door, pushing each other on to the feat of asking the grocer for the rest of the story. They saw Mr. Yapp's eyes turned on them once or twice ; but they could not get courage to make use of the opportunity. It was Mr. Yapp himself who at last brought on the crisis.

"Come, younkers," said he, "make your way in or make your way off. Don't stand in my door, preventing people coming in."

Mildred moved off ; Ambrose bolted in ; and then his sister came up to reinforce him. As the grocer had nothing very particular to attend to at the moment, he did not crush the aspiration for knowledge. He directed the children to the package of paper from which their fragment had been taken, and looked over the story himself. It would have been too long a task for such poor scholars to seek for what they wanted by reading. To compare the jagged edges of the paper was a much readier method ; and Mildred did this, while Mr. Yapp gave her brother some imperfect idea (for he was not learned on the subject) what a Combination was, and why a man was ill-treated for not entering into one. This was worth coming for ; but it was all. Mildred's search was unsuccessful. The rest of the story was irrecoverable. Many customers, some from distant farms and cottages, had been at the shop to-day ; and it was impossible to say who had carried it off.

Ambrose begged for his paper back again.

There was something on the other side that he wanted to show to Owen.

"Let's see," said Mr. Yapp. "Why, this looks like magic,—all these waves, and dashes, and dots, and signs. O, ho! it is short-hand, I see. Somebody advertises to teach short-hand. There, take it to Owen, and see what he makes of it."

Ambrose turned the paper about, but could see nothing like a hand. What could be meant by short-hand?

A way of writing short, he was told; and he remained as wise as he was before. But now Miss Selina Yapp, who stood smiling behind the counter, was desired to give the children half-a-dozen raisins apiece; and it was quite time to be going home.

Their mother was looking out for them from the door.

"Why, mother, are you going to be out again to-night? Sure the lady must be very bad!"

"I am not going to the lady till morning, dears. 'Tis poor neighbour Johns I am now going to. Sadly sunk he is; and his old woman is nigh worn out. So I've made my bit of a bed fit for her here; and it is full time she was in it. So, troop to bed, dears. Get your suppers while ye undress; and be as still as mice, sleeping or waking, when she comes in. Put your learning away till to-morrow, Owen, my boy. Pussy won't eat your paper before morning, I dare say, if you put it where it will be safe. You've had your supper; so now to bed, my boy. You'll be

fresh all the earlier in the morning. But be sure you put on your shoes the last thing, lest you should wake the old woman with your clatter."

Owen's eye had been completely caught by the mysterious figures of the short-hand specimen. He held it between his teeth while he undressed, and went on looking at it by the twilight, after he was in bed, till his brother and sister had done talking ; and then he put it under his bolster. Ambrose, meantime, stuffed his mouth with his supper very indefatigably, and yet managed to get out his story of the little boy who had been beaten for defending his father. Following his mother about wherever she moved, he made her mistress of the whole before he had done.

Mrs. Ede was not disappointed at their saying nothing about her sitting up again to-night. To them, it was so much a matter of course that she should sit up professionally, and to her that she should do what she could for a needy and suffering neighbour, that the circumstance did not seem worthy of remark. All were more occupied with Mildred's disappointment. It was feared that Mr. Ryan was gone from the village this evening, and that he would not come on his rounds again for half-a-year. He had himself bid Mildred look for rags ; and now he was gone before she came home ! Her bits of blue and white must stand over till he appeared again ; for Owen did not think any money would be given for them at the mill. Nurse stayed yet five minutes longer, to comfort her little daughter under this mischance ;

and within that five minutes, all three were sound asleep.

"Bless their little faces, how pretty they all do look!" thought the mother. "'Tis almost a pity to leave such a pretty sight. I wonder which of them will stand so by me, when I am old and failing like neighbour Johns; if it should please God I should live till then. But, dear me, what a puckered old face mine will be then!—little like their smooth rosy cheeks. 'Tis a cheerless thing for two old folks to be left without children, unfit to take care of one another, like poor neighbour Johns and his dame; and yet worse it would be for me that have laid my husband in his grave so long ago. But if God spares me my little ones, and my girl stays near me, I need not care what else betides. Bless them! how sweetly they do breathe in their sleep! And now, I must go and send the dame to her bed. I trust she will be thoughtful not to wake the children; and I'm sure they will be thoughtful towards her in the morning."

CHAPTER IV.

SIGNS IN THE SKY.

A FEW years passed away, and Mrs. Ede was in possession of the blessings she prayed for. Her children were all spared to her, in health, and, by her and their own industry, secured from

want. Upon the whole, she had reason to be satisfied with them, though there was a wider difference in their characters and attainments than she could have wished to see. She did not grow restless about what, she supposed, came by nature. She concluded it to be God's will that Owen should be "as sharp as a briar," active in his business, ready about bringing home things pleasant and wonderful to hear, and looked upon by his employer and the village at large as a rising youth who would one day be a credit to his native place. Nurse concluded it to be God's will that Owen should be thus, while his brother and sister were far from being like him. What had made them dull she scarcely knew ; unless it was being out so much on the hills without companions, or anything to do but to look after the flock, and knit. They had lost their little learning sadly, and did not now like going to the Sunday-school, as they forgot during the week what they had learned the Sunday before, and became ashamed of growing so tall while they knew so little of what was looked for in a Sunday-school. At home, too, it was a great temptation to nurse to apply to Owen when she wanted to speak about anything that interested her, or to have any little business transacted : he comprehended so much more readily, observed so much more justly, and sympathised so much more warmly than his brother and sister. But nurse was very conscientious about making no differences in her treatment of her children ; and she took pains to bring forward the younger ones, continually saying to herself,

how very steady Ambrose was, and how thankful she ought to be for a daughter who, like Mildred, made no difficulty of doing whatever she was asked, as soon as she understood what was meant.

Contented as she thought it her duty to be, nurse could not be otherwise than rejoiced when a change took place in the family arrangements, which seemed to open to Ambrose some of the advantages which his brother had enjoyed. Owen had risen from sorting rags in the mill to offices of higher trust, and requiring greater accomplishments than were necessary for the lowest operation of paper-making. He was now made a superior personage in the mill. It was his business to superintend some processes of the manufacture; to give the necessary notice to the exciseman when any paper had to be changed, or to be reweighed by the supervisor before it was sent out for sale; to see that the excise laws were observed as to the lettering of the different rooms, and the numbering of the engines, vats, chests, and presses; to remind his employer when the time approached for purchasing the yearly license; and (fearful responsibility!) to take charge of the labels which were to be pasted upon every ream. Nurse used to call Ambrose to listen, and say how he should like such a charge, when Owen related that if one label should be lost, his employer would be liable to a penalty of 200*l.*; and that, as it was necessary to Mr. Waugh's convenience to purchase five hundred labels at a time, the destruction of one lot would subject him to be fined 100,000*l.*

Owen rather enjoyed his responsibility; and, with a new sense of dignity, set about his studies in his leisure hours with more zeal than ever.—What was better, he entered with all possible earnestness into his mother's project of getting his brother into the mill before his honest influence with Mr. Waugh was exerted for any other object. Mr. Waugh had not the least objection to make trial of another son of Mrs. Ede's. He had heard that the lad was not over-bright; but he could but try; and if he did not succeed, there were still flocks to be kept on the heath as before. So Ambrose, with a smile on his sun-browned face, made ready, the next Monday morning, to set forth, with his brother, for the mill.

"If you find it rather close," said his mother to him, "being under a roof from six o'clock to six——"

"But I am to come out for breakfast and dinner, mother."

"I was going to say, you can get a good deal of air in the two hours allowed for meals. And you won't think much of the air on the hills when you have so much company about you. Think of there being thirty men in the mill, and ten women, besides the children! You can never be dull; and you must bring me home the news, as Owen always did.—The dullness will be for Mildred, when she has not you for a companion any longer. I say, Mildred, my dear; you must take care and not lose your tongue."

Mildred did not know that she should have

anything to say all day, except calling to the sheep.

"Why, my dear, I have been thinking that you and Ambrose have never made yourselves sociable with other young shepherds, as they used to do in my father's time. There must be plenty, I am sure, from end to end of yonder hills; and why should you keep within such a narrow range as you have kept hitherto? The sheep and you have legs to carry you farther; and you have eyes to keep your flock from mixing with another. Why should not you join company with somebody that may be sitting knitting like you, all alone, and wishing for a chat?"

"There's Maude Hallowell of the next parish, just above the Birchen dale; but that's a long way off," replied Mildred.

"A long way! Well, I wonder what's the use of young limbs, to call the Birchen dale a long way! Try it, my dear; and tell Maude that she should come over to your side in her turn. But she won't see such a sight as you may see, if the day be clear, when you come to the high point of the ridge over Birchen dale. How I once saw the sea glistening, miles off, through a gap of the hills!"

"And the island, mother?"

"Why, no. The island lies off there, they tell me; but it was too far away, I fancy, for me to see it. But, do you try, when you go to look for Maude Hallowell."

The Isle of Man was spoken of with great affection by the people here, as untaxed islands usually are by their neighbours of a taxed country. Many were the little secret privileges enjoyed throughout this district, even as far as the village of Arneside,—privileges of participation in various good things sily brought from the island, in opposition to all the preaching of the wine-merchants and wholesale grocers of L——, and in Arneside, of the clergyman and Mr. Waugh the paper-maker. All the children attached ideas of mystery to the island, which they perpetually heard mentioned and had never seen; and the getting any nearer to it,—the actually seeing the sea amidst which it lay, was regarded as an approach to the revelation of a great secret. Mildred thought she should like to go and look for Maude.

Nobody had imagined what an event these promotions would prove to the whole family. It brought more new ideas into their minds than all their Sunday schooling had done.

Maude was something of a scholar in her way. She might be found sitting in the heather, her knees up to her chin, and her plaid drawn over her head, poring over a particular sort of pamphlet, which was the only work she was much disposed to read. Her distaff lay on the ground beside her, while she was studying; and when she took it up, she was apt to look into the sky, or far out seawards, instead of minding her spinning. She invariably started when Mildred

laid a hand on her shoulder, or shouted on approaching her.

"Why, Maude, what makes your eyes look so big to-day?" asked Mildred, one sultry afternoon, after having led her flock to a place where she might possibly find a scanty shade under a birch.

"My eyes? I'm sure I don't know," replied Maude, winking, as if to reduce her eyes to their natural dimensions. "I don't know what ails my eyes. But I've such a thing to tell you! It takes away my breath to think of it."

"The heat's enough for that. The hill-breeze has hied away, and it is as hot——Me! I wish the clouds would come up."

"There will be clouds enough by-and-bye, or water enough at least,—clouds or no clouds," Maude solemnly averred. "Has your mother told you anything about the comet?"

"No. If it is anything bad, I doubt whether she knows it; for she was merry enough, this morning."

"Merry enough, I dare say. Not know it! These are not the sort of things your mother does not know, as I heard a person say last night. Do but you ask her about the comet, in a natural way, and see what she will say. No, don't ask her. Safer not. I'll tell you.—You see this book. If you will believe me, there is a comet coming up as fast as it can come, and it will raise a flood that will drown——O Mildred, 'tis awful to think of."

"What will it drown? Not our poor sheep?"

"Our sheep and us too. My dear, the sea will come pouring through that gap, and fill up all below, and leave us no footing on all these hills."

"Mercy, Maude! I must go and tell my mother; my poor mother!" exclaimed Mildred, starting up from her blossomy seat.

"Your mother will be safe enough," Maude replied constrainedly.

"Safe! How? Why?"

"Ahem!"

"Now, Maude, do tell me what you mean. Are you sure?"

"Yes, that I am; and you may know when it is coming, by the signs. The book tells the signs; but you must hold your tongue about them, the book says, for fear of bringing on the whole sooner than it need. There will be black storms coming up first, with thunder and lightning. That is to be this summer, while the stars stand in a particular way. I'm going to stay out late to-night, to see how the stars stand. You'll bide with me, Mildred?"

Mildred shivered as she reminded her companion how far she had to travel home: but Maude insisted that it would be necessary to see how the stars stood, in order to find out afterwards when they began to move on and cross each other. But before the three great stars came together in the sky, a cruel enemy was to rise up against the land, and there were to be some dreadful battles. This revived Mildred's old

terrors about the Turks; and Maude looked more solemn than ever when she heard how many years it was since nurse Ede had expected the Turks. By a natural association of ideas, Maude went on to explain that those who were in the confidence of the unseen powers, and who might be said to have brought on these judgments, would be in no danger. They would be safe amidst the storm they had raised, floating on the surface of the flood like straws; while all others, as far as the flood should extend, would, it was strongly apprehended, be drowned, unless they made use of "the precautions recommended in the supplement to this pamphlet; sold, &c. &c." Those who were to be preserved would have warning of the approach of the crisis by a tingling in the ancles, while the careless and confident would have another warning given them by a slight, dull pain near the nape of the neck. So, Mildred was to keep watch for any thing her mother might say about her ancles, and to take fright directly if she felt anything about the nape of her own neck.

When she was sufficiently recovered to lay hold of the book, she found that it was a very curious-looking book indeed, with a great number of little moons and stars, and the picture of a wise man, and of a large comet with a fiery tail. She could not but believe now all that Maude had told her.

How they were to get the other information,—about preserving themselves,—was the next question. This book had come over from the

island ; but not direct into Maude's hands. It had found its way over the moors from shepherd to shepherd ; and no one now seemed to know to whom it belonged, and who might be expected to procure the supplement. Owen, who had so much to do with paper, and who knew all about printing and books, was certainly the best person to apply to ; and Mildred earnestly begged the loan of the pamphlet, that she might show it to him.

" Ah, if I might !" replied Maude : " but William Scott is to have it next ; and then Bessy is to show it to her father. I dare not let it go direct to your brother ; but when the others have done with it—I'll quicken them in the reading, and then hide it under yonder big stone. See, here is a dry chink where nobody will think of prying. You may find the book here, early next week. But, for your life, don't let Owen show it. If he goes and blabs, there is no saying what will become of us all."

Mildred did not know what worse could befall than, according to the book, must happen at all events ; and she thought Owen might as well be trusted as the many people who were already acquainted with the prophecy.

" I wish," observed Maude, " the book said which quarter the first storms would come up from." And as she spoke she looked towards the sea.

" Ah, how black it is there !" Mildred anxiously observed. " It is coming up for—for—rain. Don't you fear so ? O Maude, let us be

gone ! Maude, do, for pity sake, go part of the way home with me."

Impossible. Maude must make the best of her way to her own home. If Mildred made haste, she might perhaps get to Arneside before the clouds burst. And this affectionate friend hied down the hill as fast as she could, saying she should send one of her brothers to look after the sheep. The companion whom she had terrified to the utmost was left to shift for herself and her flock. The cry of "Maude ! O Maude !" followed her far on her way ; but she only turned and waved her hand, to advise her friend to make haste homewards.

Mildred's flock did not seem to have observed the signs of the sky. It was still bright sunshine where they cropped the sweet grass ; and they were unwilling to leave their pasture. Mildred had never known them so slow in their obedience ; and when, at last, the overcast sky conveyed to them that a storm was coming, they only huddled together, instead of moving on, and began to bleat and frighten one another in a very piteous way. Mildred began to cry a little in her flutter ; but probably the sheep did not find it out ; for it made no difference in their proceedings. Their mistress was not long in deciding that she must leave them to their own wills, and take care of herself ; and a crack of thunder, nearly over head, confirmed her resolution. On she pressed, along the ridge where there seemed to be no more air than in the closest thicket in the dale. She panted with heat so

violently that she was compelled to stop, though chased by thunder-clouds, and dreading above all things to encounter the lightning alone. It came in broad sheets of flame, and not a drop of rain yet to put it out; as Mildred would have said. When she reached the point of the ridge from which she must turn into her own valley, she cast one more glance behind her towards her flock. She had never seen the hills look as they did to-day. Their tops were shrouded in darkness; and in the bottom all was nearly as murky as if the sun had long set. The flock might just be seen in a cluster below the mists upon the russet hill-side. At the moment when Mildred discovered them, the clouds seemed to open, and let out a stream of blue flame upon them. She shrieked; but there was no one to hear her. In another instant, the poor animals were seen scattered far apart; and their mistress believed that she saw one stretched on its side; the only one now on the spot from which they had just fled. She loved every individual sheep of her flock, more or less; but she could not at present tarry to see which she had lost. She scudded on, tossed in mind as to whether she should go home; or stop at some friendly house in the village. Her mother's presence had formerly been her refuge whenever she was frightened; but now she hesitated between a desire to see what nurse said about the storm, and a dread lest she should have had something to do with it. She might have left the point to be settled by circumstances.

It was impossible to walk the whole way with her hands before her eyes. The next time she looked up, she found that the clouds had been too quick for her: the storm was now before her. It seemed gathering about the village, and the grey church looked almost white against the murky back-ground. Another bolt fell,—fell into the midst of the large yew in the churchyard, under which Mrs. Arruther's handsome monument stood, looking almost new with its bright iron rails round it. The tree was riven, as if by magic. Mildred was too far off to hear the crash; and to her it seemed as if the wide-spreading tree had been reached by a finger of fire, at whose touch it fell asunder, and bestrewed the ground in a circle. In horror she turned her back to the spectacle; and the dreadful recollection came into her mind that some people said mysteriously, that her mother had somehow obtained great influence over Mrs. Arruther; and others, that it might have been better for Mrs. Arruther to have seen less of nurse Ede latterly. At this moment, it seemed as if the storm had been sent on a mission to Arneside churchyard; for westward all was again bright; and the sea, which was seldom distinguishable from this point, lay like a golden line on the horizon. Mildred could not but turn again to watch the progress of the storm. On it sped over the hills, giving out as yet no rain. It was a bleak and dreary district which now lay beneath the mass of clouds. A single farm, two miles from Arneside, was the only visible habitation. Once more

the lightning came down among the group of buildings; and before it had travelled far, a tinge of smoke rose among the barn roofs, and a red glimmer succeeded, which Mildred considered as kindled by some malicious power which wrought its will through the elements. The rain now pattered heavily on the crown of her head, and she ran, far more swiftly than before, down to the village. Instead of turning to her mother's house, she directed her steps through the village street on her way to the mill. About the middle of it she found Ambrose, standing very quietly with his hands in his pockets, staring at a picture which headed a bill pasted up against a dead wall.

"Look at the fellow! going to fly off from the sail of the windmill, with a flourish of his long tail," said Ambrose to a companion, as Mildred came up. "I wonder what it means?"

"Why, read what it means, man; where's the use of your learning?" asked the other. "I am sure those big black letters stare one in the face so, they might of themselves almost teach a child to read."

"O, but I lost my learning while I was a shepherd. Mr. Waugh was right mad with me the other day, because I could make nothing of the directions of the parcels I had to sort out. I have been getting up my reading a bit with Owen this week; but you may as well tell me what that fellow is with the long tail. I shall be an hour making it out for myself."

"Well, then: 'tis a little rogue of a devil going out to see the world; and——"

"O, Ambrose, the storm!" cried his sister.

"Ay, the tree is down in the churchyard. I have been seeing it; and here is a splinter I brought away. Me! here comes the rain. A fine pepper we are going to have."

"I hope it will pepper hard enough. Farmer Mason's barns are on fire. Won't you go and help?"

"Who told you so?—Which barn?—How did it get on fire?" and many other questions which might wait till the next day, had to be answered before anybody would stir to get the key of the engine-house; and then, so many youths ran foul of one another, and differed as to where the key was deposited, and were each bent on being the one to tell the clergyman, that Mildred had given the alarm at the paper-mill before anything effectual was done.

Mr. Waugh and Owen were together in the counting-house, looking at a pamphlet which Mr. Waugh had just put into Owen's hands.

"That's the almanack, I do believe," cried Mildred. "O, I wanted so that you should see that almanack."

Mr. Waugh explained (Owen being too much absorbed) that this was not an almanack, but a tract which he was lending to Owen. Owen was going to take it home, as he was very eager to read it; but Mr. Waugh feared there would be little in it to amuse any of the family besides. It was not so entertaining, he feared, as an almanack from the island: but he hoped Mildred had nothing to do with those almanacks. It was not

safe to have anything to do with them, as they were against the law. It was all very well for the island people to read them if they chose, as they were not against the law there: but here people were liable to be put in prison for them. "Put in prison!" exclaimed Mildred, forgetting for the moment her errand. Yes;—Mr. Waugh knew of twenty-five people who had been sent to gaol by one magistrate, in one month, for selling these illegal almanacks.

"I don't believe Maude has sold one to anybody," Mildred thought aloud.

"Well; tell her (whoever she is) that she had better not. People should never sell an almanack till they see that it bears a fifteen penny stamp. The Government makes 27,000*l.* by the almanack-duty; and the Government does not like to be cheated of the duty. It is but a small sum, certainly, to punish so many people for; but let your friend Maude take care of the law. No, no; your brother will tell you this is no almanack; though it may tell him things nearly as wonderful as he could find in any almanack. Bless me! the people are crying fire!"

"O, I forgot." And Mildred explained what she came for. The tract was thrust into Owen's pocket: the population of the mill was turned out to help; and all Arneside was presently on the road to farmer Mason's.

CHAPTER V.

OWEN AND X. Y. Z.

FROM the moment that Owen saw the scrap of short-hand which his brother and sister brought home from the hills, he had taken to the study of the art of short-hand writing. Mr. Waugh had directed him to the clergyman as the person most likely to give him information on the subject, and to show him specimens. The clergyman acknowledged that the short-hand he used was not the best yet invented; and that perhaps the best yet invented might not be nearly so good as some one not yet devised. This was enough for Owen to know, in order to excite him to enterprise. By the help of his friends, he got possession of three or four kinds, made his selection of what he considered the best, and introduced some important improvements. He tried his success whenever he could find an opportunity. Many were the curious conversations in the mill which he took down for his own amusement; and many the sermons which, to his mother's amazement, he read over to her, word for word, on the Sunday evenings, when she had heard them in the mornings. She was fast yielding to the impression that her son Owen was now nearly as wise as the clergyman.

In the tract which Owen thrust into his pocket on the alarm of fire being given, there was an

article about short-hand. Mr. Waugh had accidentally met with it at L——, and had brought it home for Owen. When farmer Mason's house and barns were all burnt to the ground, and no more was to be done for him, Owen came back to the counting-house to study this paper. Mr. Waugh could not help being amused at the eagerness with which he devoured the arguments about dashes and dots, as if they had been tidings of peace or war, or of the greatest political event of the age. This was not the first time that Mr. Waugh had had occasion to observe the animation with which scantily-informed persons read what is accordant with their particular tastes and pursuits. He had seen a farm-servant, who happened to be able to read, excited for a whole day about some new way of managing a cow, or the best method of treating a sheep's fleece; and a galloon weaver drinking in the news of the alteration of a farthing a gross in the wages of his manufacture. He had witnessed the effect of such appropriate communications in rousing the sluggish, in soothing the irritable, by turning the course of their thoughts, and in improving the arts of life, by stimulating the powers of the workmen. He had seen none more eager than Owen.

"Sir," said Owen, "I wonder whether I may ask if you know who this X. Y. Z. is?"

"Not I," replied Mr. Waugh, smiling. "I only know that I found the article lying on the bookseller's counter; and that when I made a

remark upon it, Muggridge told me I might bring it for you. If you have anything to say to X. Y. Z., cannot you say it without knowing who he is?"

"I—say anything to this person! In print! I should like—I am sure, if he knew one thing that I could tell him——But, sir, do you really think they would put in anything of mine, if I sent it?"

"That would much depend on whether they thought it worth putting in. If you have anything to say as good in the eyes of the editor as what X. Y. Z. has said, I suppose the editor will be glad to print it: but I hardly think such a tract as this can pay the writers."

"I never thought of being paid, sir! Let's see where this editor is to be found."

It was soon settled that as Ambrose would have to go to L—— in the course of a few days, he might carry a packet from Owen to Muggridge, the bookseller and stationer, who would forward it, at Mr. Waugh's request, to the editor's office in London. How absorbed was Owen, from that time, whenever he was not at his business in the mill! How silent at meals! How careful in making his pens! It would be scarcely fair to tell how many copies he made of his letter to X. Y. Z., nor how many beginnings he invented and altered. At last, he had to finish in a great hurry; for the morning was come when Ambrose must proceed to L——, and there was no telling how long it might be before he would have to go again.

"Now, Ambrose, you see this package of No. 2 has to go to Keely and Moss's."

"Very well," said Ambrose, turning it over, as if to fix its dimensions and appearance in his memory.

"You can't mistake it, for I have printed the direction instead of writing it, that you may have no difficulty. See here! 'Keely and Moss.' This little parcel you are to drop by the way, at Mrs. King's, near the toll-bar. Then, that other great package is for Bristow and Son,—you know where. And then comes Muggridge's. This, largest of all, is for Muggridge; and pray see Mr. Muggridge himself, and give into his own hands this little brown parcel with Mr. Waugh's letter outside. What makes you look so puzzled? It is easy enough to carry these to their places, is not it?"

"If I can carry in my head which is which. Let's see: this big one——"

"Read the directions, and you can't mistake. Why should you burden your memory when the names are before your eyes?"

Ambrose showed that he could spell out the names, and suggested that, if he should be at a loss, he might ask each person to whom he delivered a package to help him to make out where the next was to go. He would try to be sure to make no mistake about the little parcel and the letter for Mr. Muggridge, and would not come home without a line of acknowledgment from that important personage himself.

Owen was so evidently fidgety during his bro-

G

ther's absence, that his friend Mr. Waugh thought it right to remind him that his fate did not altogether depend on the parcel being safely delivered. There were so few printed vehicles for what such multitudes of people have to say, that a very great number must be disappointed in their wish to be heard. He owned that this was very hard; he held that printed speech should be as free as the words of men's mouths, and as copious as it was possible to make it. He had reason to desire this; and he suffered not a little from the arrangements which prevented the possibility of its taking place.

"Because more paper would be wanted then, you mean, sir. I fancy, indeed, we might make a fine business of it; if those troublesome excisemen were out of our way. There is no saying how low you might bring the price of your paper if it were not for them."

"For them, and for the law which gives them their office." The duty in itself, though the worst part of the grievance, is bad enough,—from thirty to two hundred per cent., and actually lower on the fine paper, used by the few, than on the coarse, which would be used by the many if it were not for the tax. It is the coarse which pays the two hundred per cent., and the fine that pays thirty. It is bad enough that this duty amounts to more than three times the wages of all the workpeople employed in the manufacture."

"Do you really believe that to be the case, sir?"

"It is pretty clearly made out, I fancy. There

are within a few of 800 paper-mills in the kingdom; and about 25,000 individuals employed about the article; and the value of the paper annually produced is between a million and a million and a half. The duty levied on this is about 770,000*l.*;—a most enormous amount. The wages of the workpeople can bear no kind of proportion to it. How much more paper we should make if this burden was removed, so as to allow, as far as it goes, of freedom of printed speech, one may barely imagine; or, if it is beyond our imaginations, there is a person in my mill who can tell us. You know the Frenchwoman there. She will inform you how cheaply her countrymen and countrywomen can have their say through the press. The direct interference of the government with the liberty of the press is, you know, altogether a different question. Setting this aside, there is a wonderful difference in the facilities enjoyed by the French and English for the diffusion of their knowledge and opinions.”

“Then I suppose others besides their paper-makers are better off than we for being without the duty. There must be far more printing to do; and that would occupy, besides the printers, more type-founders and ink-makers; and then booksellers and stationers and binders and engravers; then again, more carpenters and millwrights, and workmen of every kind employed in making the machinery and materials. It must cause a vast difference between that country and this, where we see a want of books on the one hand, and a want of work on the other.”

“Ay; your brother Ambrose and half-a-dozen more, standing by the hour together before a placarded wall, for want of something better to read; and scores of rag-sorters and vat-men applying to me for work which I should be glad to give them if the paper-duty was off. It is really grievous to think how few are employed in the diffusion of knowledge, compared with the numbers who are occupied to much less useful purpose. Look here. This is a list made out upon the best authority. See the proportion which employments bear to one another here. On the one side—*Literature*; on the other—*what?*

| | | | |
|--|--------|-----------------|--------|
| Printers . . . | 8342 | Publicans . . . | 61,231 |
| Paper-makers . . . | 4164 | | |
| Bookbinders . . . | 3599 | | |
| Booksellers . . . | 3327 | | |
| Stationers, (mostly booksellers) . . . | 2797 | | |
| Copper-plate Print- ers (including ca- lico) . . . | 2663 | | |
| Printsellers . . . | 593 | | |
| | <hr/> | | |
| | 25,485 | | |

So, if we exclude the calico-printers, (who do not seem to have much to do with literature) we have not so many as 25,000 persons employed in literature, while we have above 61,000 who sell beer. If we add the gin-shops to the number, what will be the proportion?”

“I find, sir, that in Manchester they have 1000 gin-shops, and not so much as one daily paper.”

“It is the fact. And as long as members go

into parliament to uphold such a state of things, while they raise an outcry against beer-shops, none such shall have a vote of mine. Which means, that I shall not vote for Mr. Arruther, if there should be an election ; as I hear there will be."

Owen thought that gentlemen who upheld the paper-duty in parliament might spare themselves the trouble of canvassing the paper-makers. He understood that Mr. Arruther was one who had a terrible dread of the people knowing too much.

"He would scarcely speak to you, Owen, if he knew you were trying to get a letter of your own into print. Well : don't set your mind too much upon it, and I wish you success with all my heart. If we should see this letter of yours next week, I am sure we may trust you not to neglect your business for the sake of becoming a mere scribbler in small publications. I think you will be careful never to take up your pen but when you really have something to say."

Owen was internally much surprised that Mr. Waugh had encouraged him in his enterprize ; for no one had a stronger horror than Mr. Waugh of the effect of what he called "low publications" on the minds of his work-people. The whole question lay in what Mr. Waugh considered to be "low publications." If he had meant low in price, it was hardly likely that he would have brought this tract for Owen : but, as few publications then happened to be low in price without being low in principle and spirit, Owen's surprise was natural.

One night of the following week, he came home with a bright countenance ; and with a trembling hand, he laid down before his mother, as she sat at work at her table, a pamphlet, very like the tract she had seen him poring over for so many evenings. He judged rightly that though she could not read, she would like to see the page where O. E. was printed.

Long did she look at those black marks ; and now, for the first time, nurse Ede learned two letters of the alphabet. From that day, she never passed the placarded wall in the village without picking out by her eye all the great O-s and E-s in the bills there pasted up. She had now some idea that her son's letter must be altered by being in print. She had heard it very often already, (without understanding much more about it the last time than the first ;) but she had now a humble request to proffer,—to hear it again.

“If you are not tired of reading it, my dear boy ; and then, when you have done, I think it is not too late for me to put on my bonnet, and go and show it to the clergyman. But I am afraid you will be tired of reading it, my dear ?”

There never was a more unfounded apprehension. It was not to be denied that Owen had read it very often ; but he did not yet feel himself tired. There was no pretence, however, for his mother's going to the clergyman. Owen had met him ; and had made bold to stop him, and show him what had happened.

When all the compliments, hearty, if not altogether enlightened, had been paid ; when Am-

brose had relaxed in his stare upon his accomplished brother; and nurse had dried her few tears and resumed her needle, and all reasonable hope had been expressed that Mildred would not be long in coming home, the happy young writer began to look forward to the next week, when there would or would not be an answer from X. Y. Z. He had already consulted Mr. Waugh on the probability of there being any answer at all, if there was not next week. Mr. Waugh had little doubt of there being some reply; Owen's remarks being made in an amicable spirit, and very courteously expressed; and if no reply should be ready by the next week, he thought there would at least be a promise of one. Owen counted the days as anxiously as in the times of his childhood, when Christmas-day and the fair-day were in prospect. He would have been much ashamed that even his mother should know how glad he was every night to think that another day was gone; and yet, perhaps, if the truth had been revealed, his mother was little less childish than himself.

The reply appeared, on the earliest possible day; as courteous as Owen's own; not altogether agreeing with him, but modestly asking for further explanation on two or three knotty points.—Who was happier than Owen? His immediate success raised his ambition and his hopes to a height which he had before reached only in imagination. He would write an answer immediately; and when that was done, he would compose a work on short-hand, giving an account of his own studies, and the improvements he believed he had

introduced into the art, with all the many ideas which during his studies had gathered round the subject. A stray notion or two about a universal language of written signs had entered his head. He would pursue the idea, and try whether he could not do something which would make him useful out of the limits of his native village. But how was he to find the money to get a book printed? his careful mother asked.—This he believed would be no difficulty: indeed, he hoped he should make a great deal of money by it. He would show the probability. In trying to do so, he proved something else,—that he had already thought enough on the subject to have made inquiries as to the cost of printing,—had actually seen a printer's bill. He told his mother that the paper for such a pamphlet as he meditated would cost 6*l.*, supposing five hundred copies to be printed. The printing would cost about 14*l.*; not more, for he should take care not to have any alterations to make after it was once gone to press. This would be 20*l.*; and the stitching would cost a few shillings more; and the advertising the same, he supposed. Say, twenty guineas the whole. Then if these five hundred copies sold for half-a-crown a-piece, there would be 62*l.* 10*s.* to come in; above 40*l.* profit,—out of which he would pay the bookseller for his trouble, and there would be a fine sum left over; and he would tell his mother what he would do with it. He would——

She promised that she would hear all he had to say on this head when he should bring Mr.

Waugh's assurance that he was likely to gain 40*l.* to divide between himself and the bookseller, by writing a little book. Meantime, she thought it too good a prospect to be a likely one; and could not believe but that everybody would be writing books, if this was the way money might be made by such a lad as her Owen.

Owen thought it a little unreasonable in his mother to doubt him, when he offered her actually a calculation of the expenses he had fully ascertained, and when she had nothing to bring against his figures but an impression of her own. However, he would send his rejoinder to the editor, as before, and think the matter over again before he said anything to Mr. Waugh.

He did so, feeling pretty well satisfied that his second letter, (into which he put some nicely-turned expressions of esteem and admiration for his unknown correspondent) would bring X. Y. Z. and himself to a perfect agreement: and anxious beyond measure for an answer to a query which he proposed in his turn,—a query, upon the reply to which hung he could scarcely say how much that was all-important to the art of short-hand writing. But next week no tract arrived, though it had been positively ordered; and twice over, to prevent mistake. It was so evident that poor Owen was internally fretting and fuming, though outwardly no more than grave, that Mr. Waugh kindly found it necessary to send Ambrose to L——, and even to Muggridge's shop.

"Perhaps, sir," said the young writer, "you would be kind enough to send one line to Mr.

Muggridge ; and then he would write an answer, if there should be any accident, instead of sending a message which Ambrose might mistake, not knowing much about book matters.

Ambrose brought back a written answer,—an answer fatal for the time to Owen's hopes. The tract was not to be had this week, nor at any future time. It was suppressed. The publisher had been informed that if he went on to issue it without putting a fourpenny stamp upon it, he would be prosecuted. The publisher could not afford to sell it, if every copy must cost him fourpence in addition to the other necessary expenses ; and still less could he afford to be prosecuted. The tract was suppressed.

" Well, well ; that is all right enough," observed Mr. Waugh. " The laws must be obeyed, and I am sure I should have been the last person to bring [the publication to Arneside if I had dreamed of its being illegal. I am sorry for you, Owen ; but the laws must be obeyed."

Owen could not bear this ; and he went home the first minute he could. His mother was full of concern, and utterly unable to understand how the case stood. She could not help having some hope that the tract would come down, after all, sooner or later ; and that Owen would surprise her by bringing it in his hand some day.

No : no hope of such an event ! Here was an end of everything. A most useful intercourse between minds which would now become once more strangers was interrupted. The improvement of a useful art was stopped. There was no

saying what might not have arisen out of this correspondence,—how much that would have been advantageous to the individuals and to society was now lost through the interference of these Stamp Commissioners. If they had let the publication go on so long, raising hopes and justifying expectations, they might—Owen could not finish what he was saying. He had supposed himself beyond the age of tears; but he now found himself mistaken. He put his hand before his eyes, and wept nearly as heartily as a girl when the spirit of her pet lamb is passing away.

This reverse had the effect of improving Owen's eloquence. He grew very fond of conversing both with the clergyman and with Mr. Waugh on the impolicy and iniquity of restraining the intercourse of minds in society, for the sake of a few taxes, so paltry in their amount as to seem to crave to be drawn from some material or another of bodily food rather than from the intellectual nourishment which is as much the unbounded inheritance of every one that is born into the world as his personal freedom.

All who knew Owen were surprised at the extraordinary improvement he seemed to have made within a short time, in countenance and manner, as much as in his conversation. It became a common remark among the neighbours, that there must be a proud feeling in nurse Ede's mind whenever she saw her manly and intelligent-looking son passing through the village, with a gait and a glance so unlike those of his former school-companions, who seemed to have

fallen back into a pretty close resemblance to those who had never learned their A, B, C. Some of Owen's sayings spread, and were admired more than if they had arrived from an unknown distant quarter. When the housewife lighted her evening lamp, her husband told how Owen had said that it was bad enough to tax the light that visits the eyes, but infinitely worse to tax the light that should illumine the immortal mind; and the paper-makers quoted him over their work, saying that no taxation is so injurious as that of the raw material; and that books are the raw material of science and art. For Owen's sake all were glad, for that of the village all were sorry, when it was made known that Mr. Waugh had resolved to part with his young friend, in order to give him opportunity for further improvement and advancement than could be within his reach at Arneside, and had procured him a good situation in Mr. Muggridge's establishment at L——.

Nurse spoke not a word in the way of objection. Such an idea as her boy's leaving his native village had never occurred to her; but she bore the surprise and consequent separation very firmly. She happily felt a secret hope that Ambrose would now rise into Owen's place at the mill, and in the society of Arneside; and really, when she saw how he was getting on, in quickness and in the power of reading, she began to believe that it was not yet too late for Ambrose to become a great man.

CHAPTER VI.

PRESS AND POST-OFFICE.

OWEN promised, on leaving Arneside, not to forget the old place and his old friends ; and though he soon became a prosperous man, he lost none of his interest in those who were proud of being regarded by him. Reports arrived of the importance of the young Arneside scholar in L——; in that large and busy town, which was like London to the imaginations of the villagers. Owen was Secretary to the Mechanics' Institute there, in course of time, after having won two or three prizes, and introduced the study and practice of his favourite short-hand. A straggler from Arneside had met him in the streets of L——; had been with him when he was stopped by three people within a hundred yards, all eager to ask him something about the newspaper,—the Western Star ; and had finally watched him into the hotel when, well dressed in black, he had passed in with several gentlemen who were attending a public dinner there. Owen must have grown into something very like a gentleman to be attending a public dinner, and to be consulted three times within a hundred yards about a newspaper. One of Owen's tokens of remembrance was this weekly newspaper, a copy of which he sent down regularly to the landlord of the Rose, Mr. Chowne, to be circulated through the village

when it had been read in the tap-room. This was considered a very handsome present; and, indeed, some of his careful friends, remembering that sevenpence-halfpenny a week is *l.* 12s. 6d. a year, consulted together about sending him word that he was too generous, and that they were scrupulous about accepting so expensive a remembrance from him. His mother, however, heard of this, and put an end to all scruples by expressing her confidence that her son would do nothing which he could not properly afford; and it afterwards transpired from some quarter that Owen had told somebody that this newspaper cost him nothing, an intimation which certain of the village politicians interpreted as meaning that he wrote the whole of it. From the moment that their version of the story was adopted, the eagerness with which the "Western Star" was received was redoubled; and those who could not read listened with open mouths while those who could told the news, and magnified as they went along. The gossip about the Turkish Sultan and his Ministers now became interesting, as well as the speculations about the magnetic pole; and there was no end to the astonishment at Owen's learning, which seemed to extend from courts and cabinets down to razor-strops and Macassar oil. No day of the week passed without his being pronounced a wonderful young man.

The most incomprehensible thing to the whole village was that Owen sent down warnings in his letters, more than once, that the "Western

"Star" must not be trusted as if it told nothing but truth. Its reports were declared to be often unfair, and its politics wavering and unprincipled. There was some talk in L—— of trying to get up another newspaper; and it would be a pity if (as was too likely) it could not be done; as an opposition might improve the "Western Star." This declaration seemed to exhibit an unparalleled modesty and disinterestedness on the part of Owen. Nobody would have found out that his newspaper was not perfectly fair, if he had not himself said so.

One motive to such transcendent virtue might be discerned. The reports which, Owen said, were the least of all to be trusted, were those of Mr. Arruther's speeches and conduct in the House. Owen was known to be no admirer of Mr. Arruther as a Member of Parliament; and, that the "Western Star" had always praised this gentleman, and called upon his constituents for gratitude, was supposed to be owing to the laws of good breeding, which might forbid any public blame of so rich and grand a person as Mr. Arruther. But Owen's private letters spoke very plainly of the Member; of his idleness about his duty; of his prejudice in favour of the aristocracy; and of his constancy in opposing every measure which could tend to the relief and enlightenment of the working classes. He wished that he could give his old friends the means of knowing what grounds he had for saying all this; but the London papers took little notice of Mr. Arruther, and nothing would be found.

against him in the "Western Star." He must beg any of the Arneside people who had votes to try to ascertain how Mr. Arruther had voted on such and such questions, and make up their minds for themselves whether they were properly represented.

On the days when the "Western Star" arrived, man after man dropped in at the tap-room at the Rose, to try for his turn, or to listen to any one who might be reading aloud. Nurse would never be persuaded to go and listen too, though a seat of honour would have been awarded her, by the window in summer, and near the fire in winter. She felt that she had rather wait; and a rule was made that she should have the first loan of the paper. Such was the rule, if it had but been kept. But when she had her proper turn, it did not always happen that Ambrose was ready to read, or that she was at home that evening; and she never chose to detain the treasure beyond a single day, when so many better scholars than herself were longing for it. And there was some underhand work about this matter. The newspaper had sometimes disappeared from the table at the Rose; which happened because some impatient person had bribed the pot-boy to let him or her have it first, or had slipped in through the open door, and carried it off: and then, by the time it came round to nurse's cottage, it was so thumbled and dirtied and torn at all the creases, that poor scholars read it at a great disadvantage; so that, altogether, Nurse was not much enlightened by the "Western

Star." Yet, the first thing that she remembered on waking, every Saturday morning, was that this was the day of the arrival of the newspaper; and Ambrose was sure to be reminded of it by some gentle hint during breakfast.

He went in at the Rose, one Saturday evening, to see what was doing. There sat Farmer Mason, looking more shabby than ever; as he had done each time that Ambrose had seen him since the fire. He came to learn if the advertisement and list of subscriptions in his favour were in the "Star" to-day. Nothing like them appeared; and he was drowning his disappointment in a third glass of spirit and water. Some Job's comforters were present who asked him how he could expect that his friends should consume the little money they had obtained for him in advertising; and added what they had heard about the unwillingness of many people to assist a man who had shown himself so imprudent as not to insure. Mason did not boast of any more patience than Job.

"As for the insuring," said he, "it is all very well for the rich to talk. They insure themselves; having several properties which they make to secure one another; it being the last thing likely that all or many should be burnt down. But the very cause which prevents their insuring should teach them to excuse us poor men for not doing it."

"Besides," observed the landlord, "there are so many country people that do not think of insuring against fire! Indeed, I scarcely know a

farmer that has done it; and why should Mason act differently from his neighbours?"

"And why don't the farmers insure? Why does not every body insure?" cried Mason. "Because of the tax which the rich escape paying by making one estate insure another. As long as the government is to have 200 per cent. upon fire insurances, there will be plenty of people to keep me in countenance for what some few are pleased to call my neglect."

"What business has the government to interfere with a man, when he is trying to provide against misfortune?" asked the shoemaker of the village. "It is a direct reward to carelessness to tax carefulness. And 200 per cent. too!"

"Yes: 200 per cent. If the premium is calculated at 1s. 6d., the government imposes a 3s. stamp. If you go and insure 1000*l.* worth of goods at 15s., we'll say, you must pay a duty of 80s. to government. Where is the wonder that a man would rather trust to Providence to keep the fire from his roof than submit to such a tax? The true matter of wonder is, that any government could ever shut its eyes to this!"

"Something has happened about sea-insurances which might have opened their eyes, as I know from my brother, who is now master of a ship from the next port," observed the landlord. "The last time he was here, he told me what I had no idea of before. While we have more and more ships passing in and out, the duty on sea-policies is falling off. Where the business transacted has increased one-fifth, the duty has

fallen off two-fifths: that is to say, our merchants and ship-masters go and insure in Holland, and in Germany, and in the United States of America, or any respectable place where the stamp is not so high as in England. The government might as well take off this tax at once, with a good grace; for, in a little while, all the insurers will be driven across the water. Since the duty will soon yield nothing at all, they may as well let us keep a useful branch of business among us, instead of giving it away to foreigners."

"I am sure," said poor Mason, sipping from his glass, and recurring to the faults which had been found with him,—“I am sure it is no unreasonable thing of me to look for another advertisement or two, considering how little can be done by one. Only think how many people may chance to miss seeing the paper that once, or may overlook that particular advertisement, when they might be ready enough to give, if it did but come often enough before their eyes. And I suppose it cannot cost a great deal to print ten or twelve lines; and when once it stands ready for printing, I suppose they charge less each time, as is done in other cases where there is less charged in proportion to the greatness of the custom."

The landlord knew that this was the way in America. His brother was in the habit of advertising the departure of his ship from an American port. He paid for his advertisement (which happened to be a short one) 2s. 2d. for one insertion; 3s. 3d. for two; and only 6½d. more

each time, for as long as he chose. An advertisement of eight lines, which would have cost him two guineas in England at the end of a week, cost him in America only 5s. 5d. It is the advertisement duty which makes an advertisement as expensive the twentieth time as the first in England; and, bad as the duty is altogether, this is the worst part of it; for, as Mr. Mason was saying, repetition is all in all in advertising.

"There is talk of taking off a good part of the advertisement duty," * observed the shoemaker.

"There will be less use in taking off a part than the government expects," replied the landlord, "for the very reason that the principle of an advertisement duty interferes with the lowering of the price on repetition. If the government now make, as they say, 160,000*l.* a year by this tax, they would find their profit in taking it off altogether by——"

"The increase of the paper duty, from the multitude of advertisements there would be."

"That would be true; but I would have the paper duty off too; and so I should look to another quarter for the compensation. Much more than 160,000*l.* a year would drop into the treasury from the increase of traffic of every kind which must happen in consequence of freedom of advertising. Our greater traffic of late years has not yielded more advertisement duty. We had better try now whether giving up that duty would not cause greater traffic, and so an increase of duties upon other things."

* Since done.

"One might easily find out," observed somebody, "whether the Americans advertise more than we do, from having no duty to pay. That would be the test."

"The only test; and what is the fact? There are half as many again of advertisements in the daily papers of New York alone, as in all the newspapers of Great Britain and Ireland."

"Without London. You leave out the great London papers."

"Not I. I include the great daily papers of London. We have twice as many people as the United States, and more than twice as much business; yet we have only one million of advertisements in a year, and the United States have ten millions—that is to say, their advertising is to ours as ten to one. And when you further consider, as my brother says, how many of the Americans are busy on the land instead of in trade, and how many more we have occupied in trade, from which the greater part of advertisements come, it is hardly too much to say that their advertising is to ours as forty to one. Depend upon it, we are under the mark when we say that the duty suppresses nineteen out of twenty of those advertisements which would be sent to the newspapers if we had the same freedom as the Americans; and that no mere reduction will prevent the suppression of millions which it is for everybody's advantage should appear."

"Yes, indeed; and why we should be compelled to pay to the Government for making known that we have something to sell ten miles

off, when a shopkeeper may freely put a bill in his window to tell what may be had within, it is not altogether easy to see."

"There is one thing easy to see," observed Joy, the builder; "and that is the figure that people make of our walls, sticking them all over with bills. I have more trouble than enough with pulling them down from the end of my master's house; and as sure as I next pass that way, I find it all covered over again with red and black letters, and ugly pictures. My master calls it making a newspaper of his gable. And as for the chalking,—it is said that men and boys are hired to go about chalking all the walls in the country; and before ever our mortar is dry, there is some unsightly scrawl or another on the new red bricks. 'Tis too much for the temper of any builder. For my part, I make no scruple of threshing any one that I catch with the chalk in his hand, man or boy."

Ambrose stood up for the practice of plastering the walls with bills; he having been often amused, and even led to read, by a tempting display of this kind. But it did not take long to convince him that he might be better amused, and more comfortably advanced in his reading, if he could but be supplied at his own home with a sufficiency of pictures and articles to study. He saw that it was pleasanter to sit down at his mother's deal-table for such purposes, than to stand in a broiling sun or drizzling rain, looking up till the back of his neck ached like that of a rheumatic old man.

Mason was at first equally disposed to advocate the chalking. He had himself sent his poor boys about to represent on every conspicuous brick surface within five miles, a large house in flames, with the inscription underneath, "Remember Farmer Mason and his large young family, burnt out of house and home." He believed that he owed nearly as much to this as to having employed Grice the crier to bawl his case through two or three parishes.

The shoemaker hoped that fellow Grice did not take anything from Farmer Mason for doing him this service. Grice was known to be prospering in the world; and it was a cruel thing to take money from a ruined man, the same as from a fortunate one. Mason sighed, shook his head, and applied himself to his glass. Perhaps the landlord winced under the last remark, conscious of being now actually running up a score against Mason for drink, which he would never have thought of tasting if he had not been tempted to the Rose, for the sake of seeing the advertisement of his calamity. To have defended Grice would have been going rather too far; but Chowne ventured to show that Grice was no worse than some other people.

The Government, he said, took large sums of money from all distressed people whose calamities are advertised. When there was a famine in Ireland, several thousand pounds of the money subscribed for the relief of the famishing went to the Government in the shape of advertisement-duty; and when the floods of the last autumn

had laid waste whole districts in Scotland, the profit which the Treasury made by the announcement would have rebuilt hundreds of the cottages which were swept away. And this profiting was not only on rare and great occasions. There was not a poor servant out of place who had not to pay to the Government for the chance of getting a service; and to pay exactly the same as the nobleman who wishes to sell an estate of ten thousand a-year, and to whom a pound spent in advertisement-duty is of less consequence than a doit would be to the servant out of place.

Mason sighed, and said that the thing most plain to him was that he was destined to be stripped of all he had, since there was a pluck on every hand,—first the fire, and then Grice, and the Government, and everybody. But though he was disappointed in what he came to see in the newspaper, he did not mean to go away without seeing it; and so he would trouble the landlord for another glass of spirit and water. It would be hard if he did not see the paper now, as he had no money to pay the pot-boy, like some people, for a sight of it. He did wonder, and he was not the only one that wondered, that the landlord chose to make a profit of what was sent him as a present,—taking one little advantage from one, and another from another; for nobody supposed the pot-boy put in his own pocket all the good things he got every week.

Chowne wondered what his friend Mason meant. If people chose to make presents to his servants, it was nothing to him: but,—as for his

making anything by the paper,—he could tell the present company, if they did not know it already, that there was a law against letting newspapers. He should now take care to tell his pot-boy the very words of the law,—“that any hawker of newspapers, who shall let any newspaper to hire to any person, or to different persons, shall forfeit the sum of five pounds for each offence.” If, after this, the lad should choose to run the risk, it would be at his own peril ; and nobody would now suppose that a prudent man like himself would run the risk of being fined five pounds, a dozen times over, every week.

O, but that must be an old, forgotten law, that nobody thought of regarding. Were there no newsmen in London, letting out newspapers at twopence an hour ?

The law was not so very old, Chowne said. Our good King George the Third had been reigning just thirty years when it was passed. If it was disregarded in London, he supposed people had their reasons for disregarding it ; and he was far from wishing to defend that bit of law ; but, for his own sake, he should not break it. So, perhaps, friend Hartley, who had been getting the paper by heart, apparently, while the others were talking, would have the goodness either to read aloud, or to hand the sheet over to somebody who would.

The reader had been anxious to see what was said about Arruther's being absent during two nights,—the most important of any in the session to some of his constituents,—and voting with the majority

on another question, after having led people to suppose he was of an opposite opinion. But this paper was really ridiculous in its support of that man. Here were a hundred reasons for his doing as he had done; and not one good one. Hartley had no idea of being gulled as this paper would gull him, just for the sake of whitewashing Mr. Arruther; and he began to read what the paper said. A good deal of argumentation followed, which, however animating and wholesome it might be to the persons engaged, was dull and useless to Ambrose, from his knowing nothing about the subject discussed. Seeing no chance of the party arriving at the accident and murder parts in any decent time, he determined to go home and tell his mother that they must wait, and that he did not know whether the paper was entertaining or not, this time. All were too busy leaning over the table and listening, to take any notice of him when he went away; and, as he never drank anything, Chowne did not consider himself called upon to bestow more than a slight nod on Ambrose, as the lad made his rustic bow in passing out.

Whom should he meet at the next corner but Ryan? Ambrose's wits were certainly brightened by some means or another; for he bethought himself of the use Ryan might be of to poor Mason, by serving as a walking advertisement of his misfortune. The moment he had heard that the rag-merchant was going to offer his company and his news to old Jeffery to-night, instead of always troubling nurse Ede to entertain him,

Ambrose blurted out the story of the fire, the subscription, the rapacity of the Government in regard to advertisements, and the advantage it would be to Mason if the rag-merchant would take up his cause, and beg for him through the country.

"Ay; that's the way," said Ryan. "Always something for me to do as I travel the country! However, I'll do it with all my heart. My errands are not all begging ones, as I will show you. I give as well as beg sometimes. Here, take this. This is Owen's tract (I mean the tract that was put down) come to life again. I'll give it to you this once; and if you can get anybody to join you in buying it at twopence a-week by the time I come again, I can order it for you. Not that you can have it weekly: the carriage would cost too much; but——"

"It can come by post, can't it? The 'Western Star' always comes by post, and no charge."

"Very likely; but this is not altogether like the 'Western Star' or other newspapers that come by post, as you will find when you look at it. But you can have four numbers together, once a-month, when the monthly things come for the clergyman and Mr. Waugh. Give my love to nurse; and tell her rags are down. She must take a penny a pound less if she has any to sell. The rags from the Mediterranean and the east are not all wanted, and the American paper-makers have come here to buy; and while that is the case, mine will be but a bad business. Our paper-making is a joke to theirs; and, for

my part, if something does not happen soon to quicken the demand for rags, I think I shall give up going my rounds, and bid you all good bye."

"No: don't say that, Mr. Ryan. We should be sorry not to see you twice a-year, as we have done as long as I can remember."

"Well; if you wish to help my trade, and so go on seeing me, do your best to spread this publication. If you will believe me, there are ten thousand a-week circulating of it already; and that requires a good deal of paper,—see!"

Ambrose was approaching, as slowly as he could put one foot before the other, the fifth time that his mother looked out for him from her door.

"So, here you are, my dear; and the paper, too!—and a picture at top of it to-day! That's something new. I wonder whether it be Owen's drawing. He could draw if he was to try, I'm sure."

"'Tis not Owen's paper, mother; but a much finer one, and not costing scarcely a quarter as much as Owen's."

And he told how he had got it; and helped his mother to make out the pictures, as she looked at them over his shoulder.

"Who is that lady, I wonder now," said nurse, "with her hands fastened, poor thing! and a great arm out of a cloud whipping her? What fine feathers she has in her queer hat! and what a whip! with a man's face at the end of every cord."

"That is Britannia and her task-masters, mother. Those are her task-masters,—those faces

in the whip; and they are our rulers: there are their names. And below there is—'Many a tear of blood has Britain shed under those tyrants that make themselves a cat-o'-nine-tails, to bare the bones and harrow the feelings of the sons of industry.' How cruel!—Then there is—here, in this corner——"

"A great chest all on fire. I see."

"A printing-press, that is; but what the great light round about it means, I don't know; but it does not seem to be burning away. Then, opposite, there is a black person, with an odd foot and a long tail; and see what is flying off from the end of his tail!"

"A crown, I do believe; and what is the other?"

"A mitre. The lines below are—

'My tail shall toss both Church and State,
And leave them, shortly, to their fate.'

And do look behind! There is the church window, and two men hanging. I think the fat one is the parson. Who can the other be?"

"But, my dear, I do not like this picture at all. It seems to me very cruel and wicked."

"Well, let us look at the next. Here is a man that has tumbled into the kennel; and a woman with a child in her arms falling over him; and nobody helps them up; but all the boys in the street are pointing at them. What is written over behind there? 'Gin palace.' Ah! those people are drunk, poor creatures!"

"My dear, don't say 'poor creatures!' for fear

I should think you pity them. 'They deserve all that may happen to them ; and I hope the paper says so.'

The paper said something very like it. It told the story of a man who had beaten his wife, and turned her out of a gin-shop when she had followed him there, with her infant in her arms. In his drunken rage, he had pushed the door so violently as to squeeze the infant in the door-way, and cause its death. This was related very plainly, and followed by some forcible remarks on the disgusting sin of drunkenness. Mrs. Ede was much pleased with all this, and with more which Ambrose read when she had lighted her candle, and sat down to darn his stockings. There was a story of a master who was kind enough to offer to make another trial of a run-away apprentice ; and the rebuke which a magistrate gave to a mean-spirited wretch who would have frightened his little daughter into telling a lie to save him from justice. Then came a short account of what was doing at the North Pole ; and afterwards, directions how to keep meat from spoiling in hot weather. In the midst of this, Ambrose stopped, quite tired out. When he came to "wiped with a dry cloth," his breath failed him, and the lines swam before his eyes. He had never before read so much in one day. Nurse was sorry not to hear what should be done next with the meat ; but she hoped Ambrose would be able to go on to-morrow. Meantime, she spent a few minutes in glancing over what was to her an expanse of hieroglyphics.

"Ah! here is a song!" cried she. "This is the way the song was printed in Owen's paper.—Never mind, my dear. You have done quite enough. Never mind the song now."

Ambrose could not help trying, and for some time in vain, to make out this bit of apparent poetry. It turned out at last to be a list of country agents and their abodes: a list so long as to fill a quarter of a column.—When the laugh at this mistake was done, nurse began to tell her son what a very happy mother she considered herself. It was a pity, to be sure, that poor Mildred did not get home in time to hear all that her mother had heard; and, indeed, nurse sometimes wondered whether her girl did not stay out later than she need; and whether it was a fancy of her own that Mildred was not so fond of being at home as she used to be. But still, everybody knew Mildred to be a very steady, virtuous girl, unlike two or three at the mill who might be mentioned; and, while many mothers were anxious about their lads, not knowing whether they passed their evenings at the public-house, or playing thimble-rig in the lane, or going into the woods after dark with a gun, nurse was wholly at ease about her boys. Owen was doing honourably, which partly made up for his being at a distance; and here was Ambrose improving his learning by finding out for her how meat should be kept in hot weather, and meeting with awful lessons about drunkenness. It made her feel so obliged to him! and she knew he had a pleasure in delighting her: a sort of pleasure that poor Mrs.

Arruther and her son seemed never to have had together, for all his fine education. And there were many much humbler people than the Arruthers who were not near so happy as nurse. If she could but make out whether anything heavy lay on her girl's mind——But the present was not a time to speak of the only great trouble she had. It would be ungrateful to do so to-night.—There was one more thing she should like to know, however; and that was why, when this paper blamed violence and falsehood in men that got drunk, and in bad fathers, it was itself so violent about our rulers, and told so much that she thought must be false about them. She had no wish to find fault with anything that Ryan had brought; but she had rather think the paper mistaken than believe that our rulers were so cruel as it declared.

Ambrose looked again at the pictures; thought the people who wrote the paper must be pretty sure what they were about before they printed such things; feared that the rulers and the church must be a bad set; and reminded his mother how virtuous this publication had proved itself about gin.

If nurse had known all, she would not have felt the surprise she had ventured to express; and if Ambrose had known all, he would not have concluded that because some vices were condemned and some virtues honoured in one page, the next must be pure in the morals of its politics. This newspaper was an unstamped, and therefore an illegal, publication. It was ob-

noxious to the law, and therefore an enemy to the law, and to all law-makers. Moral in its choice and presentation of police reports, and of late occurrences of other kinds, judicious in its selections from good books, and useful in those of its original articles which had nothing to do with politics, it was cruel, malicious, and false in its manner of treating whatever related to law-makers. It was what in high places is called inflammatory. Its tendency was, not to enlighten its readers about the faults of their representatives, errors in the practice of government, and the evils arising from former faults and errors; but to persuade the people that rich men must be wicked men; that the industrious must be oppressed; and that the way to remedy every thing was to strip the rich and hang the idle. Its object, in short, was to make its readers hate an authority which it chose to disobey.—If no injurious authority had interfered with the establishment of this paper, (which establishment it had not availed to prevent,) the political part of this paper would have been as moral as the rest. There is no abstract and peculiar hatred in men's minds against rulers, any more than there is against poets, or jewellers, or colonels in the army, or any other class; and no one class would have been selected for reprobation here, if there had been no provocation, on the one side, to defiance on the other. If there had been no fear of punishment for saying anything at all, there would have been no temptation to say what was unjust and cruel, to the injury of every party

concerned. But, for the sake of the four-penny stamp, a temperate and very useful publication had been put down; and there had arisen from its ruins,—another, not like itself, but seasoned high with whatever could most exalt the passions, and thereby enlist the prejudices of the multitude in its support against the law. This could have taken place only under an unwise and oppressive law; unwise in affording facilities for its own evasion; and oppressive in debarring the people from an immeasurable advantage, for the sake of a very small supposed profit to the treasury.

As Ambrose unfolded the paper, on being satisfied with what he had seen of two sides of it, two or three little papers fell out, and fluttered down to the ground. They contained a puff of the paper, and were to be circulated by him, no doubt.

“The best and cheapest Newspaper ever published in England.”

“THE TWOPENNY TREAT, AND PEOPLE’S LAW-BOOK.

“It shall abound in Police intelligence, in Murders, Rapes, Suicides, Burnings, Maimings, Theatricals, Races, Pugilism, and all manner of ‘moving accidents by flood and field.’ In short, it will be stuffed with every sort of devilment that will make it sell. For this reason, and to make it the poor man’s treat, the price is only twopence (not much more than the price of the paper.) So that even to pay its way, the sale must be enormous. With this, however, we shall

be satisfied. Our object is, not to make money, but to beat the Government. Let the public only assist us in this, and we promise them the cheapest and best paper for the money that was ever published in England.

OBSERVE !

| | s. | d. |
|--------------------------------|----|----|
| Advertisements under six lines | 1 | 6 |
| Each additional line | 0 | 2 |

Published by E. Hamilton ; and sold by all courageous Venders of the unstamped."

Why did not Ambrose read this announcement to his mother ? Why did he not, the next day, give her some of the benefit of the other two pages of this paper ? If nurse had been able to read for herself about the "devilment" with which the publication was to be stuffed, and about the nature of the contract between masters and workmen, she might, by a few words of parental wisdom and love, have saved her son and herself from future intolerable misery. One grief lay heavy at her heart already ; a grief which had its cause in the gross ignorance of one of her children. Another was in store, arising from the imperfect knowledge and mistaken credulity of her second son. In the enlightenment of the eldest lay her only security for her maternal peace.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POLICY OF M.Ps.

OWEN's visions had not all been realized. He had not yet got his thirty or forty pounds by publishing what he had to say on short-hand and universal language. He had not even published at all. This arose, first, from certain difficulties represented to him by Mr. Muggridge, and fully confirmed by a London bookseller; and, next, from his having grown modest as he grew enlightened. He was much less confident at L — than he had been at Arneside, that he could say anything very new and very valuable on a universal language.

The bookseller's first difficulty was about Owen's remarks being published as a pamphlet. He was right enough in saying that the young man did not know what he was about in wishing to publish a pamphlet. In order to intimate the risk, Mr. Muggridge told him that not one pamphlet in fifty pays the cost of its publication; and showed him how clearly impossible it was that any other result could take place. Pamphlets were triple taxed; and by what means could so small an article pay its expense of production, three kinds of tax, and the trouble of the publisher, and leave any surplus for the author? First, the paper was heavily excised; then there was the pamphlet duty of three shillings per sheet; and then the advertisement duty. And the risk of

not selling the whole must not be forgotten. The duty must be paid upon every copy of the largest edition, before a single one was sold; and if no more than twenty were purchased, and all the rest went as waste paper to the tobacconist, there would be no drawback allowed: not even time given to see whether there would be any sale or not. There were no bonded warehouses, where books might be lodged between their manufacture and their sale. To issue a pamphlet must be a speculation of unavoidable hazard——

To all but the Government, who makes sure of the taxes beforehand.

To all but the Government! And what did the Government get by it? The practice tended to the suppression of pamphlets, and not to the profit of the treasury. The very oppressive pamphlet duty yielded to the Government 970*l.* a-year. For this mighty sum were hundreds of intelligent men kept silent who might have uttered thousands of opinions and millions of facts which would have been useful to their race, but who had neither power nor inclination to issue in expensive volumes thoughts which would have been worth setting forth in cheap tracts. For this mighty sum were thousands of rational beings subjected to that restriction of commerce which is the most to be deprecated, and the least capable of defence,—the commerce of thought. What would be said to regulations of commerce which should practically prohibit a silver coinage, while it allowed but a very minute supply of copper? What would be thought of the injury to those

who had it not in their power to deal with gold ? Yet in the far more important interchange of knowledge and opinion, this monstrous virtual prohibition subsisted for the sake of the 970*l.* a-year which it brought to the treasury !

Owen could scarcely believe that the produce of the tax could be so small till it was explained what its attendant expenses were. Fifty prosecutions in the year cannot be conducted for nothing ; and the average of prosecutions in a year for the neglect of payment of the pamphlet duty was fifty. In some years, the average of prosecutions had been so much larger, or the horror of the tax had so availed in deterring from that mode of publication, that the Government had sustained an actual loss of 200*l.* under that head of duty. If Owen meant to publish at all, he had better swell his matter into a good thick volume—a ten shilling octavo, which would escape the pamphlet duty, and cost no more in advertising than an eighteen-penny pamphlet.

And what chance was there of his making it worth his while to publish a book ? Owen would know. Little chance enough of his being recompensed for his toil, and rewarded for his talent ; though he might perhaps recover the money he must lay out. If he printed five hundred copies, the expenses would be about 170*l.*, of which 80*l.* would be tax of one kind or another. Then eleven copies must be given to various institutions——

But Owen did not mean to give any away, except two or three copies to old friends.

He must. There was a law by which eleven copies of every work entered at Stationers' Hall must be presented to institutions where they are as sure to lie unread as if they were already the waste paper they will be some time or other. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are among the eleven favoured places: those rich Universities, which are exempted from that paper-duty which must be paid by every little tradesman who issues a hand-bill about his stock, and every labourer who buys his daughter a Bible when she goes out to service, or puts half a quire of fools-cap into her hand that she may write sometimes to her parents. Well; these expenses being all paid, there would remain to be divided between the author and the publisher, when every copy was sold, neither more nor less than 20*l*. That is to say, the treasury would take 35*l*., and the author and publisher together 20*l*., and this in the best possible case,—that of every copy being sold.

This statement disposed Owen to refrain from becoming an author at present,—at least till he had asked an experienced London publisher whether Mr. Muggridge did not labour under some mistake. The answer from London was that Mr. Muggridge's statement was perfectly correct; and added that, in this country, not one-fourth of the books published pay their expenses, leaving out of view all recompense of the author's ability and industry; that only one in eight or ten can be reprinted with advantage; and that, in the case of the most successful works,—works

of which the very largest number is printed and sold,—the duties invariably amount to more than the entire remuneration of the author.

From this moment Owen applied himself to make some other use of his short-hand than publishing it. He became the principal reporter for the “Western Star.”

Now a power came into his hands of whose nature and extent he had not formed any conception before he made trial of his new occupation. Upon him it now depended how much the good people of L—— and a wide district round should know of the law proceedings, of the public meetings and dinner speechifyings that took place in the town and neighbourhood. Upon Owen it depended whether the misdemeanours of certain citizens should be held up as a warning, or obligingly concealed; whether the corporation should be allowed to take its own way in quiet, or subjected to be watched by the townspeople; whether one side or both of a political question should be presented. There was no competition, as the “Western Star” was the only newspaper in the place; and nothing could be easier than it now would have been to Owen to influence the opinions of the whole reading public in L—— as to all matters of general concern, by his own. Nothing could be easier than to give his own view of any question discussed at a public meeting. It was only laying down his pencil, and folding his arms till a speaker had done, and then making a note of his first and last sentence; while the best speakers on the other side had

their best sayings put at length, and to the best advantage. As it was impossible to issue the whole of what every body said, the most natural process seemed to be to print what Owen liked most, and must therefore think the most worth carrying away. Owen himself felt that this was an unreasonable and pernicious power to be in the hands of any man; and, earnestly as he desired not to abuse it, he was so well aware that every man must have his peculiar tastes and political partialities,—he saw so clearly that no one report of his in the “Western Star” was in matter precisely what it would have been if prepared by any one else, that it offended his judgment and his conscience to be left in a state of irresponsibility in the discharge of a duty of such extreme importance. He felt that responsibility to any one mind was out of the question. If Mr. Muggridge, or any other censor, had been set over him, the only difference would have been that the public would have seen affairs through Mr. Muggridge’s medium, instead of through Owen’s: but there was another kind of responsibility to which he would fain have been subjected; and that was, public opinion. If he had known that other papers beside the “Western Star” would also publish the proceedings he was reporting, he must not only have avoided any gross act of suppression or embellishment, but must have vied with other reporters in selecting whatever was most weighty, by whomsoever said, and on whatever aspect of a question. In free competition alone, he saw, lay his security

for his own perfect honesty, and that of the public for being truly informed about public proceedings.

Owen was now in a somewhat similar position to that of the reporters of the London newspapers, some years ago, when a very few journals, compromising matters among themselves, and, secure from competition, sported with public curiosity as they chose. If a fit of yawning seized those gentlemen in the midst of a parliamentary debate, they went to the next tavern to refresh themselves with a bowl of punch; and Burke and Fox might take their chance for its being known beyond the House that they had spoken at all. Thus, if Owen grew tired, he had only to go away, and add next morning that "the meeting separated at a late hour, highly gratified," &c. &c. Again, the old London reporters did not like having to work three nights together, and gave themselves a holiday on Wednesdays. In like manner, Friday being a busy day with Owen, he might have skipped over all Friday doings, and have allowed a dead silence to rest on whatever happened on that unlucky day. He had been rather roughly treated by one of the opulent friends of the Mechanics' Institution; and, if he had not been too honest, he might have omitted a hundred notices which he printed of this gentleman's zealous exertions for the good of the town; or have made nonsense of the sentiments he uttered, or have taken care that his name should not remain upon record in the local history of which

reporters are the faithful or unfaithful compilers. This is the way that Mr. Windham's light was hid under a bushel for a whole session, when he was most conscious of his own brilliancy, and most eager to illumine the public. He had offended the reporters; and to punish him, the people of Great Britain were kept in the dark.

Besides the temptation which he had in common with them,—that of suppressing through pique and prejudice,—Owen was subjected to another. Again and again was he insulted by the offer of a bribe, or by an attempt at intimidation. One day, when he had been reporting in court, Mr. Arruther crossed over to him, and with a dubious manner, between shyness and condescension, asked him to drop in and take a glass of wine with him at his inn, that evening, as he had something to say to him.

Owen had never used any disguise as to his opinions of Mr. Arruther's parliamentary conduct; and he therefore believed that if the gentleman bestowed any thoughts on him at all, they could scarcely be very affectionate ones. He was surprised, of course, at finding himself received with as much cordiality as a person of little sensibility could throw into his manner. The wine on the table was excellent; the invitations to partake of it hearty; and the object of the invitation presently disclosed.

Mr. Arruther could not conceive why Owen troubled himself to report all the law proceedings that took place in the court. Many of them could interest none but the parties concerned.

What had the public to do, for instance, with his cousin Ellen's quarrels with him about his mother's property? Where was the use of printing law-suits,—dull things to read, as they were tiresome to manage? Owen explained that his business was to report. It was the affair of the readers of the paper what they would skip as dull, and what they chose to consider indispensable. He understood from his employer that no part of the paper was more narrowly watched than the law reports; and this was not surprising, as it was by means of these law reports alone that a great number of persons could gain accurate information respecting the laws to which they were subject. If he were obliged to regard the representations made to him as to what should be left out of the paper, there would soon be nothing left in it: for there were few kinds of intelligence that it was not the wish of some person or another to conceal: but, if he had to choose what particular department should be omitted, it should certainly be almost any rather than the law-reports. Other kinds of information had some chance of travelling round by some different means; but the newspapers were almost the only guides of the subjects of the State as to their duty to the State. He knew that Mr. Arruther was of opinion that the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them; but people could not well obey the laws without knowing what they were: so that Mr. Arruther, who wished the laws to be obeyed, should not grudge the people the little they might learn of them through the newspapers.

“Then, pray,” said the gentleman, “do not cut short that cause about Thirlaway’s road, that kept us all waiting such a confounded time this morning. Give it all; let them have every line of it; and if you find it likely to fill your paper, you can leave out my affairs, to make room for it.”

“I hope to be able to manage both, sir. The leading arguments on each side of all the causes tried this morning can be offered without transgressing our limits.”

“Better print the other entire. Do you know, Mr. Owen, I will give you a shilling a line to see how complete a thing you can make of it, provided you leave out mine to make room.”

“You do not know the person you have to deal with, Mr. Arruther. A man cannot be a reporter for a twelvemonth without knowing something of the practice of ‘feeing the fourth estate,’ as people say. I am upon my guard, sir, I assure you; and the less you say on this head the better, for your own sake.”

“On your guard! Bless me! What an expression,—as if I had said anything wrong! Do you suppose I do not know the customs of your craft? Till the management of a newspaper becomes a less expensive affair than it is at present, I do not know what better plan there can be than making out the pay of reporters for what they bring to the compositor, by letting them take fees for what they suppress. Such a custom is so convenient to all parties, that I wonder at your pretending to dislike it,”

"When you call it convenient to all parties, sir, you seem to forget the principal party concerned. However it may be with the proprietor of the paper, and with the reporter, and those who tender the fee, it is not very convenient to the public that their supply of information should depend on the length of a few purses, whose owners may wish to make private certain of their proceedings which ought to be public. It may prove convenient to some of your constituents, sir, if not to you, that it should be known exactly how you stand in that cause which was tried this morning. It is always convenient to electors to know as much as they can learn of the character of their representatives. I believe that I have no right to keep back such information ; and the report will therefore appear to-morrow, at the same length as is generally allotted to causes of that nature."

Mr. Arruther explained in vain how particularly provoking his mother's will had been ; how unexpected it was that his cousin Ellen should have been stirred up to sue him ; how little idea he had till this morning of the extent to which his lawyer had deceived him about the merits of his own case ; how glad he should be if the whole could now be dropped and privately arranged ; and, finally and especially, how little the public had to do with whether he tried to keep his mother's property, or quietly let it go to somebody else. It was in vain that he urged all this. Owen could not see why any of these considerations should interfere with the advantage which

the readers of the paper would derive from the knowledge of Mr. Arruther's proceedings. That this gentleman had a bad cause to maintain might be a very sufficient reason for his present condescension, and for his offering to double and treble his bribe ; but it afforded the strongest possible inducement to Owen to publish the whole, for the guidance of those who had it in their power to withdraw this unworthy man from public life. Mr. Arruther grew angry when all the offers he could make for the suppression of the report were simply declined.

" I do not know, sir, what has made you my enemy," he observed. " But you are my enemy, sir. Don't deny it. Do you think I am not aware of what you have done, first in trying to deprive me of the support of the editor of the ' Western Star ; ' and, when you could not succeed in that, in exposing me privately wherever you could ? "

" How do you use the word ' privately,' Mr. Arruther ? If you mean that I have whispered things to your disadvantage, or used any kind of secrecy in what I have said, you are mistaken. If you mean that I have printed nothing against you, you are quite correct ; but the reason is, that I have not had the power. If there had been any independent newspaper in the district, where I might have said what you allude to, it would have saved me the trouble of writing many letters, and have enabled me to do my duty much more effectually than it has been done. If you feel yourself aggrieved from the same cause ; if you desire an opportunity of publicly contradict-

ing what has been said about your scanty attendance at the House, and the course of your political conduct when there ; if you really wish for a fair discussion of your public character, you will assist those of us who are anxious to set up a newspaper as nearly independent as the circumstances of the time will allow."

"Not I. We have too many newspapers already. I shall not countenance the setting up of any more."

"Too many already," repeated Owen, smiling as his eye fell on a little table on which lay seven or eight newspapers, received this morning, and destined to be replaced by the same number to-morrow. "Too many! That depends on how they are divided. Perhaps you forget, sir, that while Members of Parliament have seven or eight to themselves every day, there are seven or eight thousand people who see but one paper, and seven or eight millions of persons who never see one at all. You may feel yourself ready for your morning ride before you have half got through such a pile of papers as lies there, and may find it a tiresome part of your duty to read so much politics every day ; but if you steal into the dark bye-places of a town like this, and hear what people are saying in their ignorance against being governed at all ; if you go out upon the sheep-walks, and see the country folks growing into the likeness of stocks and stones, for want of having their human reason exercised ; if you will ride down any Saturday into our own village, and see the scramble there is for a single copy of an inferior provincial

paper, you will presently lose the fancy that we have too many newspapers already."

"Too many by that one copy you spoke of, in my opinion, Mr. Owen. The people in Arneside did very well without any newspaper when I was a boy, I remember. I wish you had been pleased to consult me before you took such a step as sending them one. You should know better than to fall into the propensity of the time, for pampering the common people. You talk as wisely as anybody about putting gin in their way, and I do not see that they want news any more than gin. That was one of the few good things my mother used to say. When some complaint came to her ears about the price of newspapers, she asked whether anybody thought any harm of taxing gin; and whether the common people could not do without news as well as without spirits. She was right enough, for once. The common people can do without news. News is a luxury, as somebody said."

"O, yes. News can be done without; and so can many other things. You may lock a man into a house, and he will still live. You may darken his windows from the sun at noonday, and the stars at night, and he will still live. You may let in no air but what comes down the chimney, and he will still live. You may chain him to the bed-post, you may stuff his ears, and cover his eyes, and tie his hands behind him, and he can 'do without' the use of his limbs and his senses, and of God's noblest works: but it was not for this that God sent his sun on its course,

and set the stars rolling in their spheres, and freshened the breezy hills, and gave muscles to our strong limbs, and nerves to our delicate organs. He did not make his beautiful world that one might walk abroad on it, while a thousand are shut into a dark dungeon. Neither did he give men the curiosity with which they watch and listen, and the imagination with which they wander forth, and the reason with which they meditate among his works, that the one might be baffled, and the others fettered and enfeebled. And what does any one gain by such tyranny? Does the sun shine more brightly when a man thinks he has it all to himself, than when the reapers are merry in the field, and the children are running after butterflies in the meadow? Would Orion glow more majestically to any one man if he could build a wall up to the high heaven, and stop the march of the constellation, and part it off, that common eyes might not look upon it? If not, neither can any one gain by shutting up that which God has made as common to the race as the lights of his firmament, and the winds which come and go as he wills. That word 'news' is a little word and a common word; but it means all that is great as the results of the day, and holy as the march of the starry night. It is the manifestation of man's most freshly compounded emotions, the record of his most recent experiences, and the revelation of God's latest providences on earth. Are these things to be kept from the many by the few, under the notion that they are property? Are these things

now to be doled out at the pleasure, and to suit the purposes of an order of men, as the priests of Catholic countries measured out their thimble-full of the waters of life, in the name of him who opened up the spring, and invited every one that thirsted to come and drink freely? To none has authority been given to mete out knowledge, according to their own sense of fitness, any more than to those priests of old; but on all is imposed the religious duty of providing channels by which the vital streams of knowledge shall be brought to every man's door. If, in this day, any man who seeks to be a social administrator desires that the few should cover up their reservoirs lest they should overflow for the refreshment of the many, it is no wonder if his cistern grows so foul as to make him question in right earnest at last, whether there be not something more poisonous in the draught than in gin itself; and much that is perilous in the eagerness of the crowd who rush to lap whatever cannot be prevented from leaking out."

"You mean to say that our universities are fouled reservoirs, I suppose? It would become you to speak more modestly till you have been there."

"I know nothing of what is within the universities, further than by watching what comes out. The vague idea that I have of the knowledge that pervades them is perhaps as reverential as you, or any other son of such an institution, can desire: but I own that my reverence would be more ardent and affectionate if I could see

that that knowledge made its partakers happier than it does."

"Happier! How can you possibly tell? How should you know, when I am the only university-man, I believe, that you are acquainted with?"

"I judge by what I see. When men enjoy, the next thing is to communicate; especially when by communicating they lose nothing themselves. But it is not so in this case. What have the universities done towards showing the beauty and holiness of knowledge, as the most universal and the highest blessing which God has given to the living and breathing race of man? What have the universities done to diffuse their own treasures into every corner of the land? How have they applied their knowledge towards the promotion of the happiness of the state,—opening their doors to all who would come in, discovering or sanctioning the best principles of legislation and government, countenancing public and private virtue, and being foremost in proposing and enforcing whatever might fulfil the final purposes of knowledge by making the greatest number of rational beings as wise and happy as the circumstances of the age will admit? While I see nothing of all this attempted by our universities, I feel more respect and affection for the studies which are going forward within a Mechanics' Institution (crude and superficial studies, perhaps, but tending to promote the substantial happiness of the race), than for the pursuits of a university, or any other place, where intellectual

luxury is reserved to pamper the few while the many starve."

"I do not see much starving in the case, when we have not only too many regular newspapers, but scores of unstamped publications, which circulate their scores of thousands each. Precious stuff for your common people to batten upon!"

"When we once come to the question of quality, sir, there may be less to be said than about quantity. Is there anything here,—or here,"—taking up the "John Bull" and the "Age," "that will make the public wiser and better than they would become by reading the 'Twopenny Treat' or the 'Poor Man's Guardian.' That there is any such 'precious stuff' for readers to batten on is the fault of those who, by keeping up one newspaper monopoly, have created another."

"What new monopoly, pray? And what public would ever endure two monopolies of the same article?"

"There are two publics to suffer by the two monopolies. While the tax-gatherers take five-pence out of every seven-pence that is given for a newspaper; while the practice of advertising is so kept down by the duty as to deprive the proprietors of their legitimate profits; while a capital of between thirty and forty thousand pounds is required to conduct a good daily paper, no journal will or can be honest, cheap, and successful; and the middle classes, who can afford to see only one paper, will suffer by the long-established monopoly of the old journals. While men of more wit than capital are tempted or driven to

evade the law ; while adventurers below the reach of the law are virtually invited to defy and vilify it, the large class of poor readers will suffer by the pernicious monopoly which not his Majesty nor all his Ministers can break up, as long as legal newspapers are made to cost seven-pence, while illegal ones may be had for two-pence.— Have you seen any of these illegal publications ?”

“ Yes. Precious stuff ! Falsehoods in every sentence ; blunders in every line ; as any one who chose might show in a minute.”

“ Unfortunately, no one will choose it, in the present state of affairs. It must be easy enough to controvert any publication so bad as you describe ; but the opportunity is not allowed. These falsehoods and blunders are crammed down the people’s throats, and no one can unchoke them, because the law interferes to prevent the free circulation of opinions. I know of a young man at Arneside who actually believes that all master manufacturers make it a principle and a pleasure to oppress and worry their workmen, and that all rulers study nothing so regularly and strenuously as how to wring the hearts of the greatest number of people. He reads this (among a hundred better things) in one of these unstamped publications, which would either have never existed at all, or have treated very differently of politics, if the Stamp Commissioners had taught it no lesson of hatred against the law.”

“ Ah ! you mean that brother of yours. I heard how he was going, poor fool !”

“ If he is a poor fool, what is it that has pre-

vented his being wise? He has shown his disposition to become so by his eagerness after such reading as he can obtain ; and if he has got so far as to learn the strength of a bad argument, alas for those who step in to prevent his getting farther, and learning its weakness in the presence of a better ! If he cannot find sound political teachers, where lies the blame ? ”

“ If you had newspapers quite free, who do you suppose would write for the common people ? We should be inundated with blasphemous and seditious publications.”

“ When a man goes with his money in his hand to purchase a newspaper, do you think he is asked whether he is one of the common people ? And when newspapers sell for the cost of production and a fair profit, who is likely to produce the best, and sell the most,—the respectable and educated capitalist, or the ignorant and needy agitator ? When newspapers have fair play, their success will depend, I fancy, like that of other articles, on their quality ; and I never yet heard of any instance in which any class of people failed to purchase the better article in preference to the worse, when both were fairly set before them. Moreover, I never heard of a wise and kind government, whether of a single family, a city, or a nation, that did not desire rather than fear that its proceedings should be known and discussed.”

“ Ah ! that shows how little you know of the plague and mischief of being talked over, when any business is in hand. If you were in the

place of those who have to transact affairs on the continent, and in our colonies, you would be too much vexed to laugh at the nonsense that people believe about us. There is nothing too monstrous or ridiculous to be credited. A plague on the foolish tongues that spread such things !”

“ Or rather on the policy which allows such reports to be originated and to pass current. If a multitude of the King’s subjects at home, and of his allies abroad, believe all that is monstrous of his government, and all that is ridiculous of his people, it seems time that better means of knowledge should be given to both. While the world lasts, social beings can never be prevented discussing their rulers and their neighbours ; and if we are annoyed at their errors, the alternative is not silence but truth. When newspapers circulate untaxed, and not till then, there will be an approach to a general understanding, and to social peace.”

“ You are not exactly the person to talk of social peace, I think, Mr. Owen, when you are bent on setting me and my electors at variance by publishing my family quarrels, in spite of all I can say.”

Owen did not choose to remain to be insulted by further entreaties that he would take a bribe. He rose, observing that this was a case in which he had no more concern than with a quarrel in the Cabinet, and no more option than in announcing an earthquake at Aleppo. He was a reporter, and nothing more. If Mr. Arruther had anything further to say, he must make

his appeal to the proprietors of the "Western Star."

A few last words were vouchsafed to him before he left the room. Their purpose was to assure him that if this report appeared, he need never apply to Mr. Arruther for assistance, in case of his fool of a brother getting into any scrape, or he himself ever being tried for libel, or any disaster, public or private, befalling him. If Owen should, on consideration, decide to accommodate Mr. Arruther, that gentleman would see what he could do on any occasion when he might be of service.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAMILY SECRETS.

MR. ARRUTHER'S evil bodings had had some effect in depressing Owen's spirits before he opened the following letter from his mother, which he found on the table of his little apartment when he reached his lodgings. Nurse's share of the correspondence with her son usually consisted of cheerful and loving messages, sent by some friendly mediator who might be likely to see Owen, or was about to drop him a line on business. She had never before sent a letter, but once; and that was when the clergyman had stopped her in the churchyard, not only to ask after all her children, but to praise them accord-

ing to their respective deserts. On that occasion, nurse had gone straight to the schoolmaster, and asked him to give her a seat beside his desk, while she told him what she wished to express to Owen. Then, how had her maternal modesty raised the blush on her cheek while she made the effort to repeat the clergyman's words ! and how, while she looked round on the blazing fire, the superior lamp, the sanded floor, and neat shelf of books, did she assure herself that her old narrow cottage, with its brick floor, was just as happy a place to so favoured a mother as herself ! She now wrote under different circumstances, as her letter will show.

“ My dear Son,

“ This letter does not come out of the school-room you know so well, as the last did ; though your old teacher is so good as to be still the writer. I have asked him to come home with me, though mine is but a poor place compared with his. One reason is, that I did not wish anybody to overhear what I am going to tell you ; and there is no fear of being overheard at home, as I am mostly alone of an evening. And now I feel the disadvantage of not being able to write myself,—that I am obliged to get another to write what I have to say against my own children. Yet not against them, neither : for that seems a hard word to say : but I mean I should have been loth anybody should know that we are not altogether so happy as we once were, if I could have let you know it in any other way than

this. The short of the matter is, Owen, that Ambrose is in such a way that I cannot tell what to say to him next. He and Mr. Waugh have been quarrelling sadly. It is not for me to say which is right; and, to be sure, many of Mr. Waugh's other workpeople have been doing the same thing: but all I know is that there were no such troubles before Ambrose joined the Lodge, as they call it; and Mr. Waugh gives the same wages as before, and living is cheaper. I can only say now that Ambrose is tramping about, here and there, when work is over, and at times when he used to be at home; and that he is grown fond of show; attending a brother's funeral, as he called it, yesterday, and thinking more of the blue ribbons and the procession, I am afraid, than that a fellow-mortal was gone to his account. Indeed, he said in the middle of it that there is nothing like ceremony after all; which is not just what the Lord would have us think when he calls a brother away. I lay it all to the newspaper that Mr. Ryan brought; and the more that Mr. Ryan was taken up for selling it, and is now in prison on that account. I little thought that a child of mine would ever have to do with what was unlawful; and I never would have looked at the pictures in this paper if I had guessed what the justices would think: but Ambrose was pleased with what Ryan did when he was taken up; though folks suppose he will not be let out the sooner for it. He made a great flourish in the street, and cried out, 'Englishmen, will you suffer this?' It made my heart turn

within me to think that one that I have known as an honest man for so many years should carry his grey hairs into a prison ; and I never would have believed that Ryan would do any thing wrong. Ambrose says he has not, and is getting up a rejoicing against he comes out of prison : but the justices say he has ; and so what is one to think ? But I wish your brother would be persuaded to give up thinking of making a triumph against the justices, when Ryan comes out. I tell him that it is no triumph, after all, considering that Ryan will then have been in prison all the time that it was thought fit he should be there. But the time is past when anything is minded that I say ; though I ought not to complain, and do not ; being aware, as I always was, that I say little that is worth minding. Yet I never had to say this of you ; and I am much mistaken if Ambrose be wiser than you. You will be asking whether I comfort myself with Mildred. My dear, I can only say now that Mildred is no comfort to me ; and if you ask me why, I can no more tell you what has come over her than if I lived at L——. Sometimes I think, God help me ! that the poor girl hates me,—for never a word does she speak to me now, when she can manage to hold her tongue ; and, as sure as ever any neighbour goes out and leaves us together, she is off like a shot, and I see no more of her till some third person is here again, even if that does not happen till morning. I should be truly thankful if any one would find out the reason of such a change, for it is more

than I can well bear, if it is not a sin to say so. I try to comfort myself, my dear boy, with thinking of you who are nothing but a blessing to me. I try to be thankful, as in duty bound: but it so happens, while you are so far away, and the others just before my eyes, or expected home every moment and not coming, I cannot be comforted as it is my duty to be. It is another trouble to find the neighbours not what they were to me. Farmer Mason would not let me go and nurse his wife yesterday, ill as she is, and with nobody to watch her properly of a night. He said his cattle had pined of late, and he had lost all his fowls; looking at me, just as if I could have helped his losses, when there is nobody more sorry than I am that such mishaps should have followed the fire that well nigh ruined him, so long ago. And so it seems with others who do not look friendly upon me as they did. Everything appears to be going wrong with everybody; and we do not seem able to comfort one another as we used to do. This is a sad saying to end with; so I just add that Kate Jeffery is the same good girl, whatever changes come over others; and I depend on her going on in her own right way. You will be glad to hear this; and I hope you will not make yourself too uneasy about the rest: but I could not help opening my mind to you, having always done so before, and never with so much occasion. And now I shall wish to know if you have anything to say upon this. He that holds the pen promises to read me whatever you may write, very

exactly, and to keep all a secret, we so desiring. So no more now, except that Mrs. Dowley has got another boy, and poor widow Wilks's eldest has had the measles very bad, but is now better," &c. &c.

Owen had not the least doubt of his old teacher's accuracy in reading the letter now requested, or of his discretion about its contents; but Owen had no intention of committing to paper what he had to say. He must go down to Arneside, without delay, and see whether anything could be done to make the people there happier than they seemed to be at present. He obtained leave to go down, the next afternoon; and, in the meantime, got no sleep for thinking of his mother's sorrows, and of the hours that must pass before he could do anything to relieve them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MYSTERIES LAID OPEN.

WHILE nurse was by turns dictating her letter and sighing, till the scribe caught the infection, and lost his spirits; while the wind moaned in the crevices of the rickety dwelling, and the flame of the single candle flared and flickered in the draughts of the poor apartment, Ambrose was under a securer shelter, and Mildred under none at all. Ambrose had been assisting in rearing in new brothers who had joined his

lodge. He had helped to blindfold them, and to guide them through the mummeries which were calculated to answer any purpose rather than that of adding sanctity to an oath. The jargon of the verse to be gabbled over, the dressing up, the locking in, were more like the Christmas games of very young school-boys than the actual proceedings, the serious business of grown men. Mummery has usually or always arisen from an inconvenient lack of shorter and plainer methods of explanation, and of facilities for communication. This sort of picture-writing is discarded, by common consent, wherever the press comes in to fulfil the object with more ease, speed, and exactitude. When Ambrose declared that "there is nothing like ceremony, after all," he testified that he belonged to a nation or a class which is stunted in the best means of communication, and kept in an infantine state of knowledge and pursuit. If he had been growing up to a period of mature wisdom, like his brother, he would have told the brethren of his lodge that there is nothing so childish as ceremony, after all. To form into a lodge, or a company, or whatever it may be called, when a number of men have business to do, is the most ready and unobjectionable method of transacting that business; but if the brethren cannot be kept in order and harmony without being amused by shows, or excited by mystification, they had far better be playing cricket on the green, than pretend to assist in conducting the serious affairs of their class. Much better would it have been for

Ambrose to have been playing cricket on the green this evening, than frightening people even more ignorant than himself with death's heads, horrible threats, and oaths made up of the most alarming words that could be picked out of the vocabulary of unstamped newspapers. Much better would it have been for him to have been reading anything,—book, pamphlet, or newspaper,—than to have sent his sister on such an errand as she was transacting on the hills.

Mildred was made, without her own knowledge, a servant of the lodge, a messenger from all the discontented with whom Ambrose was connected to all the discontented in the district. This trouble was imposed upon her because the country folks were unable to read, and paper was dear, and advertisements were dearer still. The object was to bring people together to consult on their fortunes, and the measures that should be taken to mend them. Mr. Arruther would have said that it was well that so improper an object should be frustrated by the absence of all assistance from the press: but Mr. Arruther might have been told that there is no frustrating such an object; and that the only effect of the press not being concerned in it was, that the summons bore a very different character from what it would have had, if there had been perfect freedom of communication. In a newspaper, the notice would have been that people were to meet at such a spot, at such an hour, and for such and such a purpose. As it was, Mildred was scudding over the hills, shivering whenever the gust

overtook her, as if it must bring something dreadful; starting if she found any one awaiting her at the appointed places, and trembling if it was herself that must wait; and faltering or gabbling in equal terror, as she delivered the circular which was to be carried forwards by those whom she met; the circular being as follows:—

“ Meet on Arneford Green,
Six and seven between.
Bring words as sharp as sickles,
To cut the throats
Of gentlefolks,
That rob the poor of victuals.
Hungry guts and empty purse
May be better, can't be worse.”

The political wisdom of the district had discovered that all was going wrong within it. Farmer Mason's live stock was dying off, and his wife had been long confined to her bed with some grievous affliction. Neighbour Green's dog had gone mad, and had been very near biting some children that were playing in the road. The wheat on the uplands looked poorly; and the mill-stream was dry; so that many of Mr. Waugh's workpeople were out of employ. It must be a very bad government that allowed all this to happen at once, some people said: but there were many who hinted that the blame did not all rest with the Government, and that there was one person who might some day prove to have had more to do with those disasters than everybody liked to say. This hint had gone the round, and become amplified in its course, till it was con

sidered a settled matter by every one who entertained the subject at all, that nurse Ede was quite as pernicious to Arneside as the Government and all the gentlefolks put together ; and that there should be no attempt at rebellion till nurse had been called to account for her witcheries.

The affair had been brought to a crisis by this evening, when Mildred was delivering her circular on the hills. She was expected and lain in wait for. Suddenly she fell in with a party who would not let her proceed till she had been sworn on her knees to tell all she knew of her mother's proceedings, of the nature of her intercourse with her black cat, and of the uses of the mysterious apparatus which now filled her cupboard as well as the shelf. The girl knew nothing of what she was required to confess ; but she did what she could to please her tyrants. She poured out all the nonsensical fancies, all the absurd suspicions, which had been accumulating in her ignorant mind from the days of her childhood till now. The sum total proved even more satisfactory than the party had expected.— There was now but one thing to be done. Nurse must be forced to recant, and make reparation ; and that as soon as possible. The managers of the enterprise must not quit their hold of her till she had begun to restore Mrs. Mason ; revive the calves and poultry that remained alive, if she could not restore those which were dead ; set the mill-wheel revolving again ; brought showers upon the upland corn-fields, and confessed pre-

cisely what kind and degree of influence she had exerted over poor Mrs. Arruther: for it was not to be forgotten how the lightning had split the tree beside the lady's monument, the last thing before it fired Farmer Mason's barn.

While all this was passing, nurse had dismissed the good-natured schoolmaster, and had looked after him from the door, shading her candle with her apron, till she could see him no longer; and had sat down, with a sigh at her loneliness, to mend one more pair of stockings for Ambrose, to take the chance of one or other of her children coming home for the night. She had nearly given the matter up when she thought she heard a little noise outside the door. As she looked up, she saw a very white face pressed close to the window, and looking in upon her.

"Come in! Who's there? Lift up the latch and come in, whoever you are," cried she, who, having never wished harm to any human being, had no fear of receiving harm from the hands of any. "My girl!" exclaimed she, as Mildred stood on the threshold, looking uncertain whether to set foot in the cottage, or to retreat, "My dear, ye are right enough to come home to a warm bed to-night. It will be but a chilly night for sleeping beside the fold, if that is really what ye do when ye don't come home. I've been looking for ye, my dear; so, come in, and shut the door, and see what supper I've been keeping ready for ye. Why do ye keep standing outside in that way, Mildred?"

As nurse sat at the table, looking over her

spectacles, with her candle on one side, and the cat on the other, drowsily opening and shutting its eyes, as if quite at ease, there seemed to be something which prevented Mildred from advancing a step towards the party. She only said in a shrill tone,

“ They’re coming.”

Who was coming,—whether Ambrose and the brethren from the lodge, or the long-dreaded Turks, or any people more to be feared still, could not be ascertained. All that could be got out of Mildred was, “ They’re coming.” The door was still standing wide, the parley was still proceeding, when they came..

A night of horrors followed; horrors which were once perpetrated in the metropolitan cities of mighty empires; and then descended to inferior towns; and then were banished to the country; and now are seldom to be heard of, even in the remotest haunts of ignorance. But such horrors are not yet extinct. Since the sacrifice of nurse Ede, others, perhaps as guileless and kind of heart, have met a fate like hers.

During the whole of the dreadful scene of violence and torment, the mother called on her children. As if they had all been present, she implored them to bear witness as to what her life had been, and to save her from her persecutors. She had reared her sons with incessant watchfulness, from the time that their little hands could only grasp her finger, up to the manly strength which might have saved her now: but Owen was far away, dreaming of no evil; and

as for Ambrose, his face was never seen, all that night. Mildred was present,—standing in her mother's view during all those fearful hours; but the call on her was also in vain. She stood staring, with her arms by her sides, and her hair on end, only wincing and moving back a little when her mother's appeals to her became particularly vehement. This was the child who had been the object of as fond parental hopes as had ever been shed over the unconsciousness of infancy. Hers was the arm which was to have been her mother's support to church on Sabbath days. Hers were the hands which were to have relieved her parent of the more laborious of their homely tasks. She it was who should have enlivened the day with her cheerful industry, and amused the evening with the intelligence which nurse had done her best to put in the way of improvement. This was the child! And this was the contrast which flitted through her unhappy mother's mind as she was dragged past Mrs. Arruther's monument, and taunted with the memory of that poor lady.

Mrs. Arruther and she were both unhappy as mothers. The child of the one was as destitute (whatever might be his scholarship) of all the knowledge which is of most value in the conduct and embellishment of life, as these his despised neighbours; and the protracted torment which he caused his parent might, in its sum, equal that which nurse was enduring to-night. The crowning proof of his substantial ignorance was

his desire and endeavour to keep others in that state of darkness of which the deeds of this night were some of the results. There will be no more mothers so wretched as Mrs. Arruther and her nurse when mothers themselves shall know how to give their children true knowledge ; and when their children shall have access to that true knowledge without hindrance and without measure.

One thrilling sound of complaint at last penetrated the chamber of the clergyman ; and, in consequence, nurse was presently in her own bed, attended upon by Kate Jeffery, while Mildred sat in a corner of the cottage, staring as before. She let Kate bring her to the bedside, when her parent's unquenchable tenderness was kindling up once more ; but the girl was pitiably at a loss what to say, and how to conduct herself.

" I never did, my dear ; if you will believe the last words I shall ever speak. I never did, or thought of doing such things as they say. Tell them so, when I am gone ; will you ? Only tell them what I said. O Mildred, cannot you promise me even that much ?"

" She is mazed," said Kate Jeffery, in excuse of her old play-fellow. " She will come to, by-and-by."

" I wish I was mazed, if it be not thankless to say so," muttered nurse. " But it will all be over soon. Well : it is God's will that my son Owen is so far from me at this time."

She little guessed how soon her son Owen

would be standing where Kate was now. But, soon as it was, it was too late for nurse.

It was indeed a withered and haggard cheek (as nurse once anticipated) that her children looked upon as they watched her rest;—not her breathing sleep, but her last long rest. Owen must have been quite overthrown by meeting such a shock on his arrival, or he could never have spoken to Mildred as he did. He upbraided her for the stupidity with which she had given ear to the ridiculous falsehoods which had been hatched against one of the most harmless women that had ever lived: falsehoods that any child in L—— would have been ashamed to be asked to believe. But it was impossible that Mildred, or any one else, could have really credited such things. It could have been only a pretence——

“No; no pretence,” Kate interposed to say. “There would have been no malice, if there had not been profound ignorance. No one could have helped loving nurse, and doing nothing but good to her, up to her dying day, if it had but been known why and how she practised her art; and that no woman has really the power, by prayers and charms, of stopping mill-streams and maddening dogs.”

“How could I tell?” mournfully asked Mildred. “They all said—I’m sure I thought they would have killed me first. They all said, and they all think, that she was an awful and a wicked woman; and what else could I think?”

I'm sure I never durst touch her, or scarce anything that she had touched before me, after what Maude Hallowell told me."

"You are out of your mind, I think," said Owen, bitterly. "To talk as you do, and she lying there!"

"And if Mildred was out of her mind, Mr. Owen," said Kate, in a low voice, "is she to be taunted with it, as if it was her fault? I should rather say that she has very little mind; for hers seems to me never to have grown since we were at the Sunday school together. Surely, Mr. Owen, it is the narrow mind that is least able to help itself under foolish fears, and any horrible fancy that may be riding it till it is weary. Surely it is not merciful to taunt a mind that is so miserable in itself already."

"Then I will not taunt her, Kate. It will be sorrow enough to her, all her days, to have to pass my mother's grave, and think how she was sent there. Go, poor girl, and tell the clergyman that it is all over. Nobody shall hurt you: I will take care of you. Nobody shall blame you: the blame shall rest elsewhere."

"Where?" asked the bewildered girl, as, in a flurried manner, she tied on her bonnet to go to the clergyman. "What are you going to do now, Owen? Where——what did you say last?"

"That nobody shall blame you, as I did just now, for what has happened to our mother. It is no fault of yours, Mildred, any more than it

can be called Ambrose's fault that he now lies in prison——”

“ In prison !”

“ Yes : he has been taken there (God knows whether according to law or not) for the part he has taken about swearing in the brothers at his Lodge. There he was, poor fellow, when my mother was calling upon him in a way to break a heart of stone, they say.” Owen saw the convulsion which passed over his sister's countenance as he made this allusion ; and he resolved to refer to that dreadful scene no more. “ Whatever may be done with Ambrose, he has perished. His life is blasted, whether, as some suppose, he is sent abroad, or whether his punishment is to be worked out at home. How should he have known better ? The only bit of law he knew, he learned by accident from a newspaper ; and when he would have learned more, the only lesson-book he could get taught him wrong ; and it could never have taught him so wrong, if those which would have instructed him better had not been kept out of his reach. The judge and gaoler are to be his teachers now. Those little know what they are about who take pains,—for any purpose,—to hold men ignorant. If they could keep the light of the sun from the earth with the thickest of clouds, they would do mischief enough in making the plants come up sickly, and the tall trees dwindle away, and rendering every thing fearful and dismal, wherever we turn : but all this is harmless trifling

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compared with the practice of keeping the mind without the light which God has provided for it. This it is that brings discontent towards God, and bad passions among men ; temptation to guilt to the careless, and long heart-suffering to the kindest and best ; and the fiercest of murders as the end of all. O, mother ! mother !”

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